

1976

# The prisoner of war camps in Canada 1939-1947.

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*University of Windsor*

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THE PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS IN CANADA

1939 - 1947

by

JOHN JOSEPH KELLY

A thesis  
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of History in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at  
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario Canada

1976



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This thesis is dedicated to Ron and the three years that  
he toiled on my behalf.

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## ABSTRACT

This study begins in 1936 when Ian Mackenzie, the Minister of National Defence, urged the formation of a Canadian Defence Committee to deal with the problem of enemy aliens. The proposed workings of the Committee are analyzed, and its ultimate powers are set forth. This Defence Committee was divided into various sub-committees, one of which is the "Committee on the Treatment of Enemy Aliens on the Outbreak of Hostilities", and its aim is noted. P.C. 531, which established these committees is also examined. The Committee's first report of 25 January 1939 and its analysis of the types of individuals to be interned upon the outbreak of war are stated. By the end of October 1939, some 358 individuals of questionable loyalty had been arrested across the country.

The only previous involvement in handling prisoners of war had been in World War I with the Director of Internment Operations being Major-General Sir William Otter, K.C.B., C.V.O. In establishing the Directorate in World War II, it was felt that this project would be handled jointly by the Department of the Secretary of State and the Department of National Defence. It was believed that only about 400 civilians would be interned in Canada, and as a result, two camps were opened to handle them - one at Petawawa and one at Kananaskis, Alberta. It was felt that important work

could be done at both these spots, which were originally relief camps during the Depression, and had been used for forestry works.

Civilians who were interned were subject to the terms of P.C. 4121 of 13 December 1939, entitled "Regulations Governing The Maintenance of Discipline and Treatment of Prisoners of War", which was based on the Geneva Convention. This gesture by the Canadian Government allowed all interned civilians to be subject to the benefits of the Geneva Convention.

With the deterioration of the military situation in the European theatre in the summer of 1940, the Canadians received a request from the British Government to accept prisoners then being held in England.

Prior to the fall of the Continent, only the most militant German civilians living in Britain had been interned. With the deteriorating situation as the Panzers swept westward, an "internment panic" hit Britain and all foreign males were interned. These along with the German military personnel captured so far in the war, presented a potential "Fifth Column" behind the British lines (as had been evidenced in the Low Countries) if the Germans managed to free them. Ottawa was not happy with the British request, but ultimately acceded. The authorities prepared other sites to hold these prisoners - Red Rock, Mimico, Calydor (Gravenhurst), Three

Rivers, Cove Field (Quebec City), St. Helen's Island. Some 7,000 prisoners arrived in Canada in June and July 1940. Other camps were set up at Espanola, Monteth, and Ile-aux-Noix to house these P.W., who were both military and civilian types. Later camps were at Fredericton, New Brunswick, Farnham, Quebec, Angler and Neys on the Trans-Canada Highways at Schreiber, and at Sherbrooke, Quebec. Camps were established at these sites to have the prisoners work (according to the Geneva Convention) for the Federal Government. Civilian internees and refugees were separated from military personnel. Most of the refugees had been classified as "Refugees From German Oppression" by the British Government, and were ultimately returned to Great Britain after the crisis had passed. While resident in Canada, they were employed on a Works Program of manufacturing projects at various camps. These programs were to utilize the skills possessed by many of the internees, and centered around manufacturing of light netting and cutting and sewing of textiles. Remuneration was to be 20 cents per day, and ultimately resulted in quite a profit. It kept the refugees gainfully occupied, and permitted them to earn money with which to finance any purchases from the camp canteen.

Combatant German P.W. held in Canada were subject to treatment under the International Convention Relative To The Treatment of Prisoners of War (Geneva Convention) as set

forth in P.C. 4121 of 13 December 1939. The interests of the prisoners were guarded by the Protecting Power (the Swiss Government and its representative Mr. Jaccard) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (and its representative Mr. Maag). Under the Geneva Convention, officer prisoners were given their pay by the Detaining Power, but other ranks prisoners of war had to work in order to obtain enough money to purchase goods from the canteens. On their arrival in the Canadian camps, the German officer prisoners complained about their quarters, and stated that these were not fit for a German officer. This sort of harassment was experienced by the authorities for the duration of the war, for the P.W. were constantly inventing complaints and forwarding them to the Protecting Power. In all cases, they had no foundation for these complaints which were invented simply to cause problems for the Canadian authorities.

With the transfer of more prisoners to Canada in 1941, a new officers camp was opened at Bowmanville. Victories in North Africa in 1942 led to the arrival of 20,000 P.W., and they were housed in the largest P.W. camps in Canada at Medicine Hat and Lethbridge, both of which held 12,000 prisoners. All these prisoners became pawns in the political game of chess played after Dieppe. The German decision to shackle British and Canadian prisoners was met with a similar shackling of a number of German prisoners here

in Canada. The order was met with passive resistance in all camps - breaking and burning of shackles, etc. However at Bowmanville, this order resulted in a three-day melee. In what became known as the Battle of Bowmanville, Canadian military personnel engaged German prisoners in hand-to-hand combat. However, efficient handling of this problem by Canadian authorities prevented any further outbreaks.

On 1 January 1943, the Department of National Defence became the sole body in charge of Internment Operations. In May 1943, P.C. 2326 was passed authorizing the use of P.W. in agricultural and other labour projects. These P.W. were employed on farms in Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario and Alberta. They did valuable work in harvesting sugar beets, chopping lumber, and doing essential farm work. They lived in hostels (satellite camps) and in some cases, on individual farms. These P.W. were paid 50 cents per day, and with the ultimate profit gained by the Canadian Government, this was quite a wise investment.

Mention is made of the work and efforts of the Psychological Warfare Committee which sought to segregate prisoners and establishment of a program of "re-education". The work of "Gestapo elements" in the camps is noted, and counter measures by the Camp Interpreters and Intelligence Officers are analyzed. Examples of conditions in the camps are given with special mention of the hanging of August



Plaszek at Medicine Hat. The PHERUDA program is analyzed, and its aims are set forth.

The final chapter is devoted to an analysis of Canadian internment operations in World War II, utilizing the opinions of individuals involved in the Directorate, and the author's own observations.

In order to write this thesis, the author signed an undertaking with the Director, Directorate of History, National Defence Headquarters, promising, in part, to "....observe the spirit of Cabinet Directive 46, dated 7 June 1973, specifically by making no reference to individual names of German prisoners of war, from this source...."

In the time period since this thesis was researched and written, the files of the Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, have had their designation changed. To reflect the transfer of authority over the prisoners from the Department of Secretary of State to the Department of National Defence, the papers were transferred from the auspices of the Department of Secretary of State (RG 6) to the Department of National Defence (RG 24). Similarly, the volumes have been re-numbered. A list of the new volume numbers can be secured by writing Miss Barbara Wilson, Public Records Division, Public Archives of Canada.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Though ultimately written by only one person, a thesis is actually a composite effort, based on the aid and assistance that one obtains from a multitude of people.

Similarly with this work, I am indebted to many people who gave freely of their time and materiel so that I might write a more complete and detailed study. These include the

following people: Colonel Eric D.R. Kippen, O.R.E. of Como, Quebec, who consented to an interview and supplied several letters and maps of prison camp layouts, and photographs of various camps. He also provided me with advice and help in

understanding internment camp life, and directed me towards Colonel W.J.H. Ellwood, also of Como, Quebec. Colonel Ellwood gave me an interview, and helped by also providing photographs of the camp at Lethbridge, and documents that were of use in explaining camp policy. Major D.D. Jameson of Ottawa

granted me an interview and kindly furnished me with a photograph of the Directorate Staff in 1944. He also introduced me to Major Harry Wade, who answered my queries on internment operations. Major A.F. Kemble of Toronto gave up an afternoon to chat with me and provide some valuable data, along with a photograph of the Camp Staff at Mimico, 1940-1941.

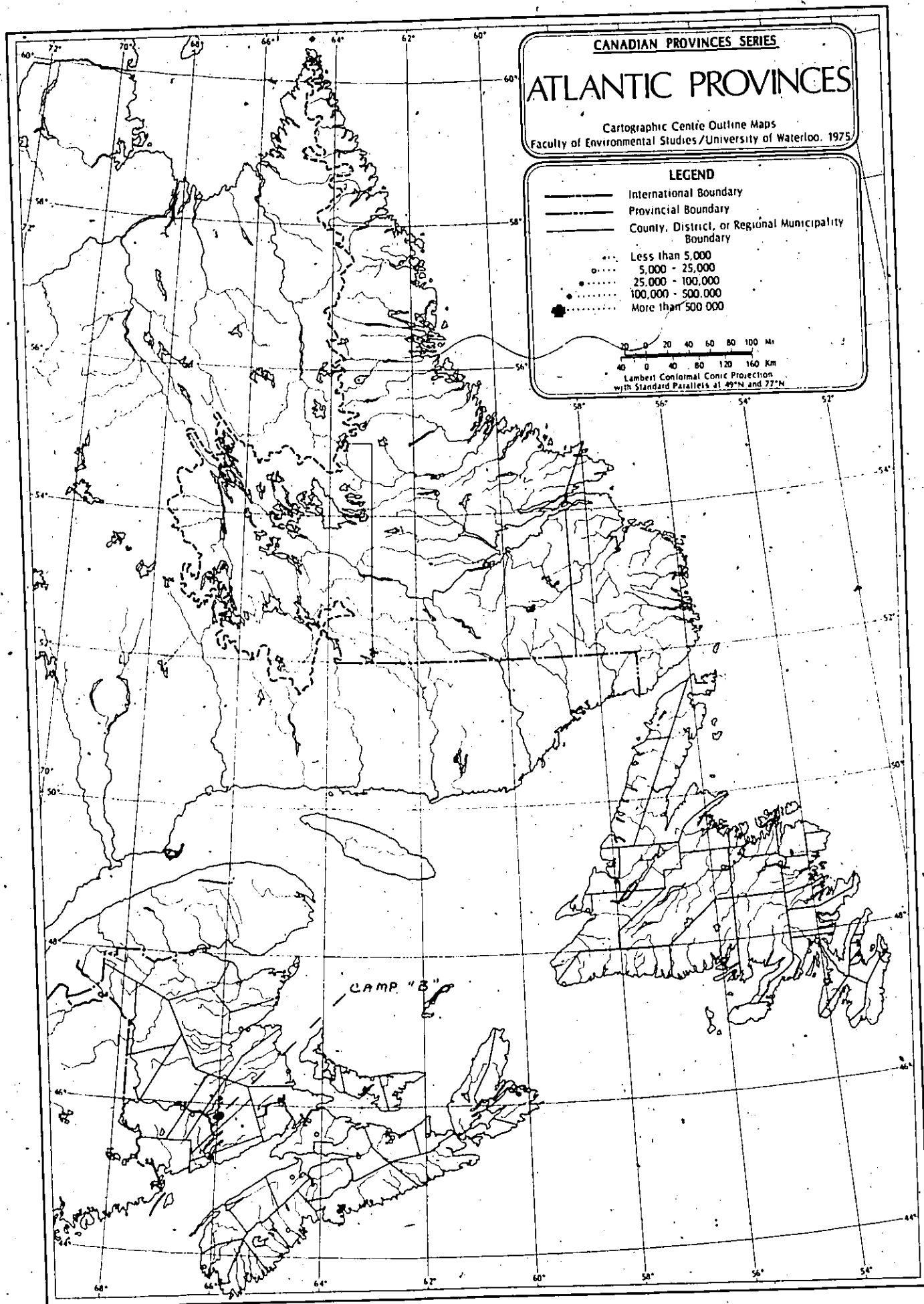
Lt.-Col. R.S.W. Fordham, E.D., Q.C., LL.B of Ottawa also took an evening out of his schedule to answer questions.

I am indebted to Dr. Alex Douglas, Director of the Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, for permitting me access to these papers. Special thanks go to Mr. Philip Chaplin at the Directorate, who helped me with researching and making available files and material for two thesis topics dating back to 1973. I certainly appreciate his efforts on my behalf. Thanks are also extended to Jim Whalen in the Public Records Division at the Public Archives, for assisting me with the material after it had been transferred from the Directorate of History.

My typist, Margaret Sniderhan, deserves a special vote of thanks for struggling through my original notes, and the two typewritten versions that ultimately were turned out. I shall always remember the hospitality that she and her husband, Jim, showed me during this period. Thanks are offered to my Thesis Committee members - Professor Terry Keenleyside of the Political Science Department, and Professor Ian Pemberton of the History Department. Their astute observations and critical comments gave great assistance in preparing this final draft. ~~There is~~

Finally, words can never express the gratitude I feel towards my thesis advisor, Ron Hoskins. He suffered through the abortive topic on "The Royal Canadian Navy and the Defence of Newfoundland 1937-1945", and then saw this topic through another two years of work to its culmination. ~~It~~

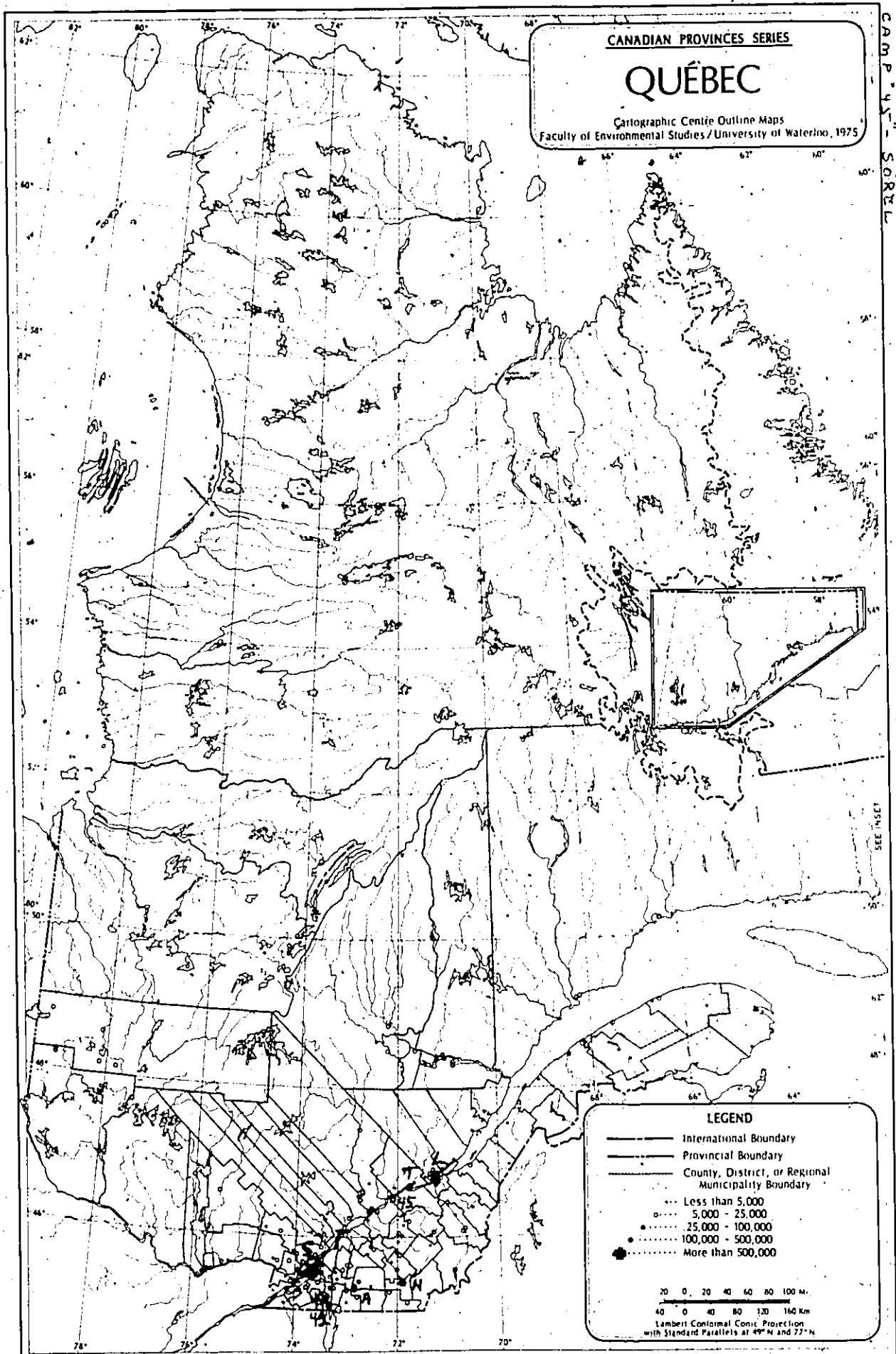
CAMP "B" (LATER CAMP "76") AT LITTLE RIVER  
NEW BRUNSWICK, 25 MILES EAST OF FREDERICTON.



CANADIAN PROVINCES SERIES

# QUÉBEC

Cartographic Centre Outline Maps  
Faculty of Environmental Studies / University of Waterloo, 1975



## LEGEND

- International Boundary
- Provincial Boundary
- County, District, or Regional Municipality Boundary
- Less than 5,000
- 5,000 - 25,000
- 25,000 - 100,000
- 100,000 - 500,000
- More than 500,000

20 0 20 40 60 80 100 Mi.

40 0 40 80 120 160 Km

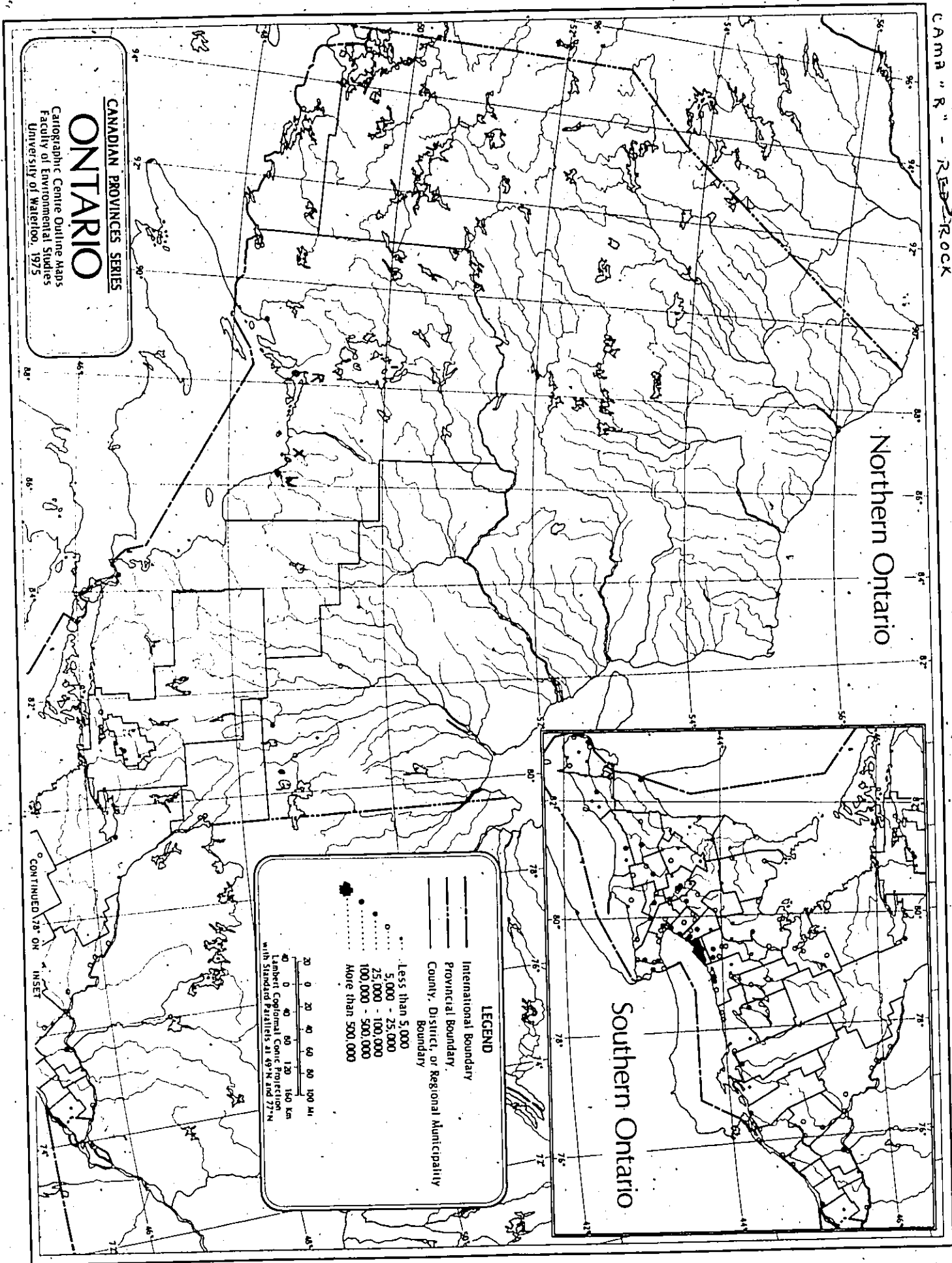
Lambert Conformal Conic Projection  
with Standard Parallels at 46°N and 57°N

CAMP "A" (LATER CAMP "40") - FARNHAM  
CAMP "1" (LATER CAMP "41") - ISLE AUX NOIX  
CAMP "N" (LATER CAMP "42") - SHERBROOKE (NEWINGTON)  
CAMP "S" (LATER CAMP "43") - ST. HELENS ISLAND (MONTREAL)  
CAMP "44" - GRANDE LIGNE  
CAMP "45" - SOREL

CAMP "T" - THREE RIVERS

CAMP "Q" (LATER CAMP  
CAMP "R" - REEVE ROCK

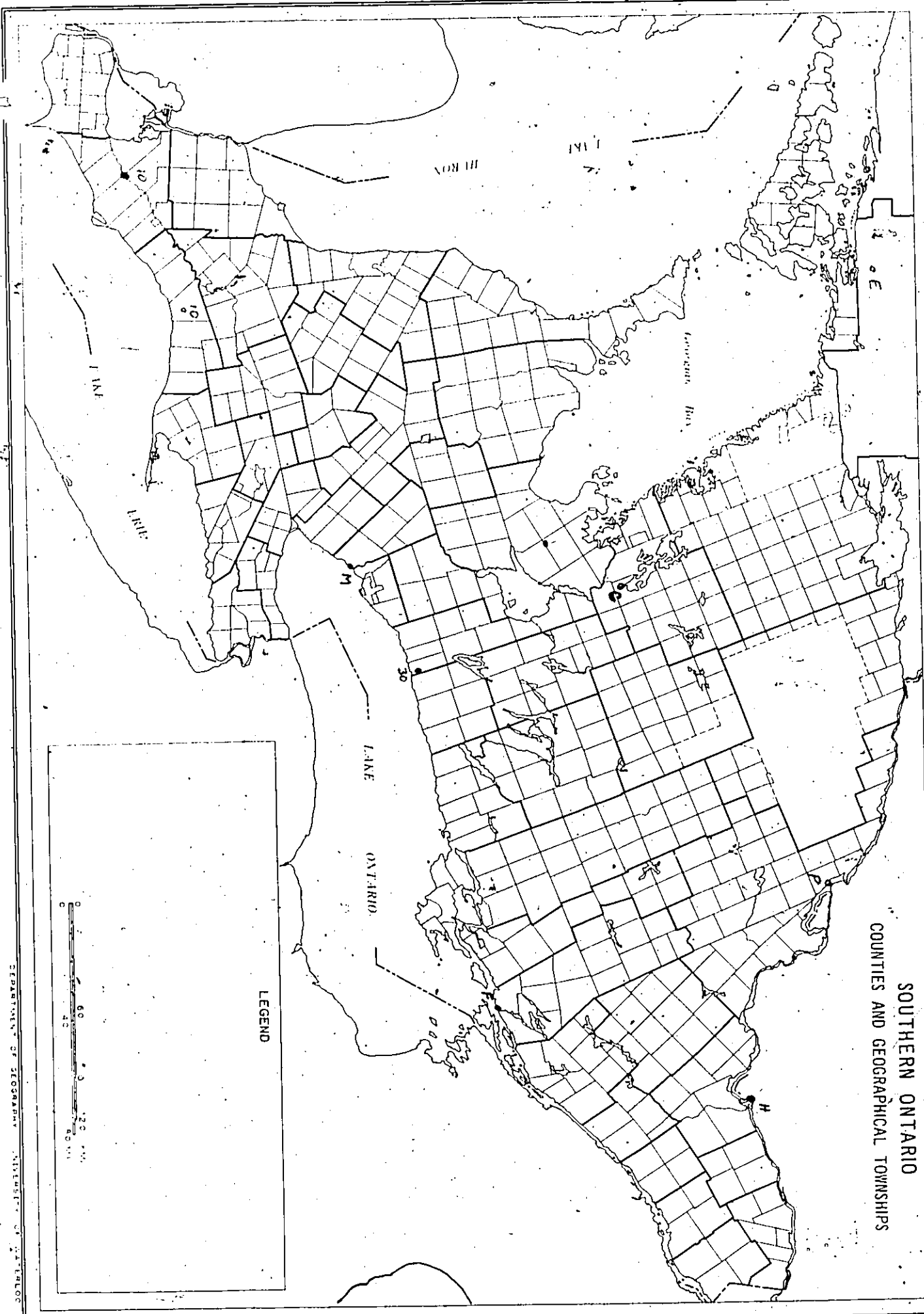
CAMP "X" (LATER CAMP "101") - ANGLER



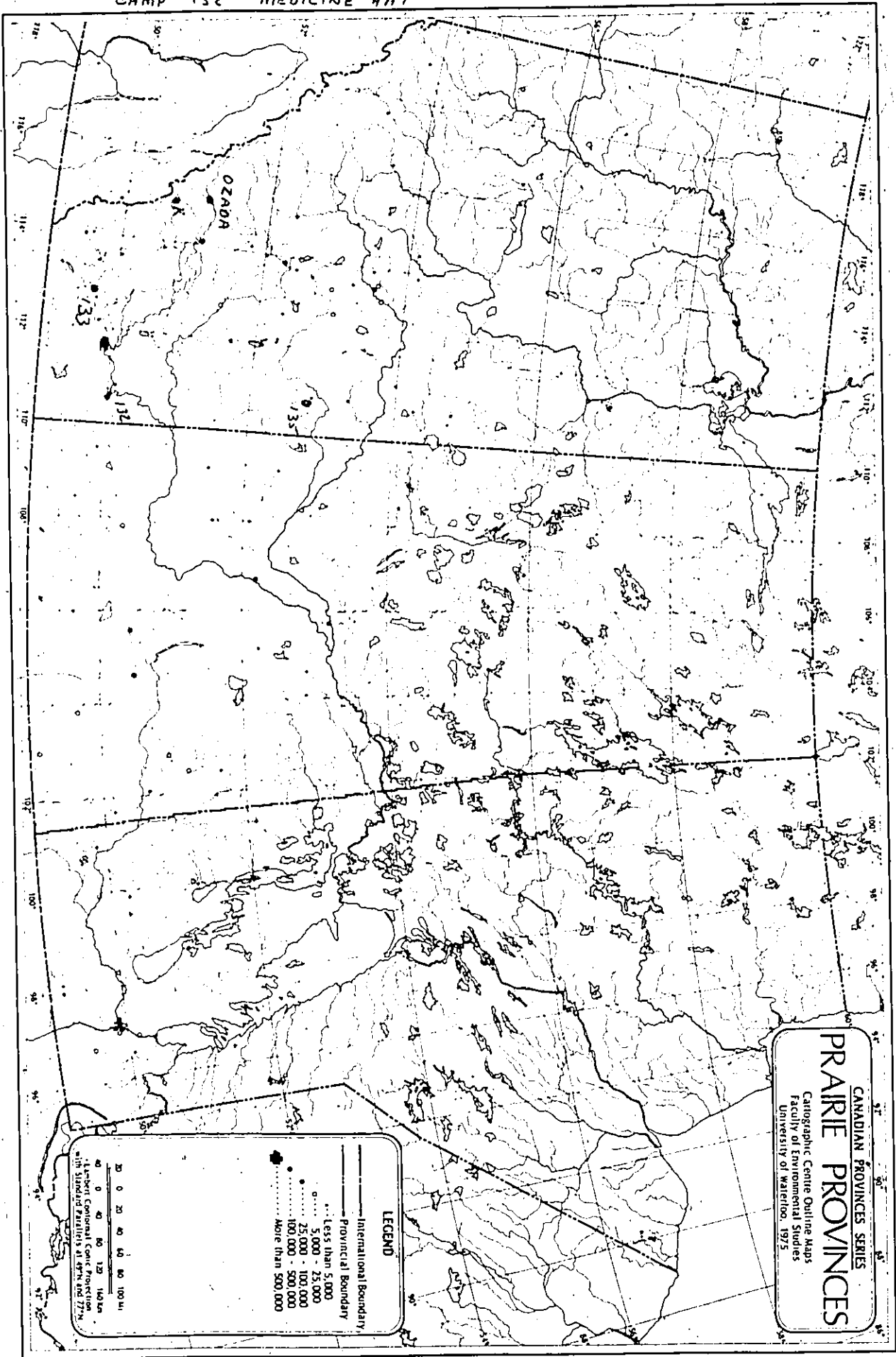
CAMP "10" - CHATHAM - FINGAL  
 CAMP "C" (LATER CAMP "20") - GRAVENHURST  
 CAMP "E" (LATER CAMP "21") - ESPANOLA  
 CAMP "M" (LATER CAMP "32") - MIMICO

CAMP "30" - DURNHAMVILLE  
 CAMP "P" (LATER CAMP "33") - PETTICAWA  
 CAMP "F" (LATER CAMP "31") - FORT HENRY  
 CAMP "H" (LATER CAMP "32") - HULL

# SOUTHERN ONTARIO COUNTIES AND GEOGRAPHICAL TOWNSHIPS



OZAODA  
 CAMP "K" (LATER CAMP "130") - KANANASKIS  
 CAMP "132" - MEDICINE HAT  
 CAMP "133" - LETHBRIDGE  
 CAMP "135" - WAINWRIGHT





Chapter 1 - Initial Detentions and the Opening of the Camps at Kananaskis and Petawawa.

Great Britain's declaration of war against Nazi Germany on 3 September 1939 set into motion the Canadian Government's preconceived plan to arrest and detain enemy aliens. Across the country, Royal Canadian Mounted Police patrols went into action, rounding up suspected Nazis and German sympathizers. One of the largest manhunts took place in Montreal, where in the early morning hours of 4 September, thirty special parties of R.C.M.P., aided by squads from the Legion of Frontiersmen and other volunteer citizens, raided homes of people prominent in the National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter, the Deutsche Bund and other German organizations.<sup>1</sup> Scores of suspected German sympathizers were arrested in Montreal alone.<sup>2</sup>

These initial arrests were the result of several years of planning - planning that had gone on behind the scenes while Canadian diplomats had maintained a policy of non-intervention in the affairs of Europe. The moving force behind this planning was Ian Mackenzie, the ex-Captain who held the defence portfolio in the Mackenzie King administration. His first observations on the subject were

<sup>1</sup>Lawrence W. Conroy, "Scores of Montreal Nazis Seized in Pre-Dawn Raids by R.C.M.P.," Montreal Gazette, 4 September 1939, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>"Ancient Fort on St. Helen's Island To House Enemy Alien Prisoners," Montreal Gazette, 5 September 1939, p. 6.

included in a letter to the Prime Minister, dated 7 January 1936, in which he advised forming a Canadian Defence Committee which would deal with the problem of enemy aliens. Defence, his letter said, comprises various subjects including:

the treatment of enemy aliens within the country...and the preparation of the necessary legislation to enable the Government to exercise...wide powers.

The Defence Committee would coordinate these measures and should be a committee of the Cabinet. Its function would be "...merely advisory and consultative,"<sup>4</sup> and it would be further divided into sub-committees to investigate the whole scope of defensive preparations, and subsequently report back to the parent committee.

The matter was allowed to simmer for a time, while the tempo of action in Ethiopia, as well as Europe, increased in intensity. The Canadian Government continued to pursue a policy whereby the Prime Minister avoided any commitment in European affairs. It was felt that our geographical position and population precluded overplaying our role in Europe, and if the more powerful countries were unwilling to take a stand, why should Canada? Ernest

<sup>3</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 220, p. 189608, "Canadian Defence Committee - A Suggestion As To Its Functions and Composition", 15 November 1935.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 189609.

Lapointe summarized the Government's attitude when he said: "No interest in Ethiopia, of any nature whatever, is worth the life of a single Canadian citizen. No consideration could justify Canada's participation in (such a war..."<sup>5</sup> The bloodless German occupation of the Rhineland in the spring of 1936 again gave evidence of the Canadian desire to remain as isolated as possible from the arena of European affairs. The views of the Prime Minister tended to coincide with those of O.D. Skelton, the Under-Secretary For External Affairs:

King shared with his chief advisor a profound suspicion of the centralizing tendencies of the London Government, a resentment at the way in which attempts were made to commit Canadians to British policies without consultation, and a determination to keep aloof for as long as possible from the complications of European power politics. Skelton and King were not anti-British, though they feared and distrusted the English politician.... They also thought that the real threat to Canada's developing independence came from Great Britain and from Europe generally.... It was the British Empire that would get into a European war and it was the jingoists and imperialists at home and in Great Britain who would demand Canadian involvement....<sup>6</sup>

It was not until August 1936 that Ian Mackenzie's

<sup>5</sup>James Eayrs, In Defence of Canada - Appeasement and Rearmament (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Norman Hillmer, "O.D. Skelton: The Scholar Who Set a Future Pattern", International Perspectives, XXV (September-October 1973), 45.

recommendations were resurrected. The Italo-Ethiopian war had proven that the League of Nations was an ineffective weapon with which to promote peace, and despite the official Government attitude of non-involvement in external crises, it was felt that precautions were necessary should the situation continue to worsen. On 20 August, an Order-in-Council was passed, establishing a Canadian Defence Committee as a Sub-Committee of the Privy Council. Members would be the Prime Minister (Chairman), and the Ministers of Justice, Finance, and National Defence. The Committee was empowered "to call before it any official or employee of the Government, and any officer of the Naval, Military or Air Force ...whose duty it shall be to afford the Committee every assistance and all information...."<sup>7</sup>

With war clouds billowing on the horizon, measures had to be taken to prepare Canada for any eventuality. Defence estimates were increased by 70% from \$20 million to \$34 million. The ever-vigilant Ian Mackenzie reviewed Canada's defence posture and in the spring of 1937 sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister in which he recommended the establishment of various sub-committees to function during the summer and prepare confidential information. Along with sub-committees to investigate questions relating

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<sup>7</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Orders-in-Council, RG 2, 1, Vol. 1972, file 1429G, P.C. 2097, 20 August 1936.

to censorship, treatment of enemy and neutral shipping and air raid precautions, the Minister recommended a "Committee on the Treatment of Enemy Aliens on the Outbreak of Hostilities." It would be formed "...purely for the purposes of the tabulation of information, and on this, the Department of Justice...should take the lead."<sup>8</sup> The Prime Minister approved of this scheme and wrote back instructing Mackenzie to "have steps taken to have this machinery put into motion."<sup>9</sup>

The Prime Minister's audience with Adolf Hitler after the 1937 Imperial Conference was successful in conveying the governmental attitude that if there was a war of aggression, Canada would be at Britain's side. Preparations continued in order to ready Canada for such a possibility, and on 14 March 1939, the Committee of the Privy Council passed an Order in Council (P.C. 531) establishing standing inter-departmental committees to "inquire into and report upon practical problems concerning Canada which might arise in time of war or emergency, real or apprehended, and the measures to be taken."<sup>10</sup> The Committee on the

<sup>8</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 237, p. 203733, Ian Mackenzie to Prime Minister, 8 April 1937.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 203751, W.L.M. King to Ian Mackenzie, 22 April 1937.

<sup>10</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Orders-in-Council, RG 2, 1, Vol. 2003, page 1, P.C. 531, 14 March 1938.

Treatment of Aliens and Alien Property was to be chaired by the Under Secretary of State, and have as members representatives from the Departments of the Secretary of State, External Affairs, Justice, Mines and Resources, National Defence and Finance. They were to inquire into and report upon the treatment of aliens and alien property in time of war or emergency, real or apprehended, and were empowered to call upon any official in regard to information.

With the "official" government attitude epitomized by King's desire "to go on steadily as if all were proceeding satisfactorily,"<sup>11</sup> it was necessary that no mention of these committees and their functions be allowed to reach the public ear. With this secrecy being paramount, only two copies of P.C. 531 were circulated - one to O.D. Skelton, the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, and one to Lieutenant-Colonel L.R. Lafleche D.S.O., the Deputy Minister of National Defence. Both men were cautioned by Mr. E.J. Lemaire, Clerk of the Privy Council, of the confidentiality of this document.<sup>12</sup>

Using the terms of reference set forth in P.C. 531, the Committee studied the problem of aliens and alien

<sup>11</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J 13, page 269, 14 March 1938.

<sup>12</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Orders-in-Council, RG 2, 1, Vol. 2003, File 16936, E.J. Lemaire to O.D. Skelton, 15 March 1938; E.J. Lemaire to Lt.-Col. L.R. Lafleche, 15 March 1938.

property, and after 10 months of analysis and consultation, submitted its first interim report, dated 25 January 1939. This report became the cornerstone in the establishment of internment operations in Canada at the outbreak of World War II. It analyzed the types of European nationals who were residing in Canada and recommended that they be left alone, save in cases where there were grounds for suspicion of subversive activities. It was proposed that the power for arrest and detention of enemy aliens should be vested in the Commissioner of the R.C.M.P. (as in World War I) and that those who were arrested and detained would be released if they signed an undertaking to observe and obey the laws of Canada.<sup>13</sup> Those who refused to sign the undertaking or

<sup>13</sup> Regulation 24 of the Defence of Canada Regulations spells out the terms of that undertaking:

"promise that I will report to such officer or official and upon such terms as the Canadian authorities may from time to time prescribe; that I will carefully observe and obey the laws of Canada and such rules or regulations as may specially be prescribed for my conduct by competent authority; that I will strictly abstain from taking up arms against and from doing any act of hostility towards the Government of this country, and that, except with the permission of the officer or official under whose surveillance I may be placed, I will strictly abstain from communicating to anyone whomsoever any information on the military preparations which the authorities of Canada, or the United Kingdom or any of His Majesty's dominions or any allied or associated Power may make, or concerning the resources of Canada, and that I will do no act and will not encourage the doing of any

did not abide by its rules were liable for internment in camps to be established by the Department of National Defence, and if deemed necessary, guards, supplied by National Defence, would be placed on these premises. Since World War I records of internment were in the custody of the Department of the Secretary of State, and since that Department administered the general immigration act concerning aliens, and held alien naturalization records in the Naturalization Branch, the Director of Internment Operations would report to the Secretary of State. The Director was to "...be responsible for the supervision and coordination of internment operations throughout Canada"<sup>14</sup>, and it was important that he be an officer of experience and of senior rank in the militia, for close cooperation was necessary among the Director, the Department of National Defence and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The report was printed as a secret document and distributed to members of the Government.<sup>15</sup>

With the partitioning of Czechoslovakia in

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act which might be of injury to the Dominion of Canada or the United Kingdom or any of His Majesty's dominions or any allied or associated Power."

<sup>14</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Orders-in-Council, RG 2, 1, Vol. 2003, File 1946 G, P.C. 2521, 4 September 1939.

<sup>15</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 272, p. 230206, A.D.P. Heeney to Ian Mackenzie, 6 February 1939.



September 1938, and the German march into Prague in March 1939, it became painfully evident that appeasement had failed. With war imminent in July 1939 the Committee on Emergency Legislation (established by P.C. 531) delivered its first report on the question of legislation required in the event of war, real or apprehended. The Committee felt that the War Measures Act would be sufficient to handle an emergency, for it gave the Executive "ample authority to take pretty well whatever action might be found to be necessary to meet the exigencies of war or other emergency."<sup>16</sup> It noted that many restrictions (including some applying to enemy aliens) would be needed in order to permit the effective handling of the country's business. The Defence of Canada Order 1917 (comprising of the consolidation of the fifty main regulations) was revised and updated into a Draft Defence of Canada Order 1938. The Committee on Emergency Legislation recommended that the Government approve the Regulations in principle, save for Regulation 21 (restriction and detention order), which some members felt was an infringement on personal liberty.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J4, Vol. 153, File 1305, p. c110236.

<sup>17</sup>The regulation provided inter alia that the Minister of Justice if satisfied that any person is about to engage in activities prejudicial to public safety or the safety of the State, might make an order directing that the person be detained, and imposing upon the person such instructions as may be specified, and that any person detained under the

The signing of the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact on 23 August 1939 ended any hope that peace might be preserved and brought an end to the Canadian policy of non-involvement. The Canadian Government proclaimed the War Measures Act (Chapter 206, Revised Statutes of Canada, 1927) with respect to apprehended war, and pledged that Parliament would be summoned if peace were broken. Under the provisions of the Act, the Governor in Council

may do and authorize such acts and things and make from time to time such orders and regulations, as he may by reason of real or apprehended war, invasion or insurrection deem necessary or advisable for the security, defence, peace, order and welfare of Canada.<sup>18</sup>

provisions of the regulation shall be deemed in legal custody. It was felt by some members of the Committee that some persons of "hostile internationalist affiliations" might attempt to impede the war effort and that it was necessary to have the means to take action against such people, whether they be British subjects or aliens. Other members of the Committee were not prepared to recommend the adoption of such a regulation as they felt it would be unnecessary interference with the liberty of the subject. For further information, see:

Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J4, Vol. 153, File 1305, pp. c110255-c110259, the First Report of the Committee on Emergency Legislation.

and also W.L.M. King Papers, MG 24, J1, Vol. 273, pp. 231087-231089.

<sup>18</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J4, Vol. 153, File 1305, p. c110256.

It is clear that the statute conferred upon the Executive ample authority to take whatever action was necessary to meet the exigencies of war or other emergency. In reality, the proclamation of this Act effectively denied the civil rights of all Canadian citizens.

On 26 August, the Commissioner of the R.C.M.P. addressed two letters to the Minister of Justice in which he listed names of individuals who should be arrested under the powers granted by the War Measures Act, upon the outbreak of war, as well as organizations and their newspapers which should be outlawed.<sup>19</sup> Commissioner Wood felt that timing would be important in the success of this operation:

It is suggested that the above recommendations be put into effect immediately war is declared involving Germany and Italy, and simultaneously - that is to say - as soon as the Order is passed making these organizations illegal,

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<sup>19</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 273, pp. 231077-231079, "Internal Security-Measures Taken on the Outbreak of War", 2 December 1939.

Individuals to be interned were members of the National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter, Arbeitsfront, Italian Fascio. Lists of Japanese nationals were also being prepared. Organizations to be outlawed under the War Measures Act included the Auslands Organization of the N.S.D.A.P., Deutscher Arbeitsfront, Deutscher Bund Kanada (Canadian Society for German Culture), Arbeitsgemeinschaft (Provincial), Hitler Jugend, Bund Deutscher Maedels, Italian Fascio, Opere Volontarie Repressione Anti-Fascisto-O.V.R.A. (National Organization for the Repression of Anti-Fascism), Dopolavoro (After Work Organization), Associazione Combattenti Italiani (Italian War Veterans Association), Organizzazioni Giovani Degli Italiani All'Estero-O.G.I.E. (Italian Youth Organization Abroad), the Italian United Moral Front. Newspapers to be suppressed included "Deutscher Zeitung Fur Kanada" (Winnipeg), "L'Italia Nuova" (Montreal), "Il Bolletino" (Toronto), "L'Echo Italo-Canadese" (Vancouver). As a further precautionary measure, the R.C.M.P. recommended the outlawing of groups such as the Communist Party of Canada, Young Communist League of Canada, and other Ukrainian, Finnish, Croatian, Jewish, Hungarian organizations and their press. It was felt that these groups should be ignored until they acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the state, and then action would be taken.

the Head Offices and residences of the leading officials or functionaries of the said organizations should be raided and all records of the organizations found in their custody seized. If staged without a warning, these raids will give us access to important documents relating to the membership, correspondence etc. These documents will be of great value in identifying people as members of the respective organizations....<sup>20</sup>

Norman Robertson (External Affairs) and Mr. J.F. MacNeill (Department of Justice) were ordered by their Ministers to discuss these matters, and analyze the course of action to be followed. After reading the program recommended by Commissioner Wood, they came to the conclusion

that the program suggested would involve a good deal of bitter inter-racial resentment and the prospect of endless labour troubles throughout the industrial and mining areas, as well as the alienation of the sympathy and support of large numbers of persons who, if properly handled, could be led to support any efforts the Government proposed in connection with the war effort rather than to oppose them; that the Police should concentrate on plans for the immediate arrest of persons suspected of treasonable activity, and that they would be ill advised to destroy organizations about which they know a good deal and with whose personnel they are familiar, as it would drive such persons underground and greatly increase police problems in this country in time of war....<sup>21</sup>

As a result of the discussion, Mr. Ernest Lapointe, the Minister of Justice, asked that a committee be formed to

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 231078.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 231080-231081.

study the subject of restriction and detention orders, and the measures to be taken to suppress subversive activities. The Committee, composed of Mr. Norman Robertson, Mr. J.F. MacNeill, and Superintendent E.W. Bavin of the R.C.M.P. met and issued a report to the Minister of Justice, dated 3 September 1939. They listed four categories of individuals to be detained on the outbreak of hostilities: National Sozialistizche Deutsche Arbiter members; male members of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront; males not of these groups, but who were German nationals resident in Canada; and naturalized Canadians of German birth or members of a racial organization who could not be regarded as loyal citizens of Canada (especially leaders of the Deutscher Bund).<sup>22</sup> Some

<sup>22</sup>The National Sozialistizche Deutsche Arbiter (N.S.D.A.P.) was the German National Socialist Party. It was an integral part of the Auslands organization of the Nazi Party in Germany. Its members subscribed to the same undertakings as members of that Party, and its officers were appointed by and worked under the direction of the National Socialist Party of Germany which is itself an official agency of the German Reich. Every member of the Party undertook to obey implicitly and without question the orders of the Fuehrer and his representatives.

The Deutsche Arbeitsfront was a closely knit affiliate of the N.S.D.A.P. It consisted of German nationals who described themselves as "true followers of the Fuehrer". Like members of the N.S.D.A.P., they were recent immigrants to Canada and were nearly all of military age, and thus under German law were liable for compulsory service in the German Army.

A third group consisted of German nationalists resident in Canada who were not known to formally be members of either the N.S.D.A.P. or the Arbeitsfront, but who, from their political and social associations, business and industrial connections and other opportunities for espionage were believed to be persons who could not safely be allowed at large in time of war.

325 persons were to be arrested, 265 of whom were German nationals and sixty naturalized Canadians of German origin. This was a small number in comparison with the 35,809 people of German birth in Canada at the time of the 1931 census, and the 36,711 persons of former Austrian and German nationalities who had become naturalized in Canada since 1920.<sup>23</sup>

On the morning of 1 September, there came news of the unleashing of the German blitzkrieg into Poland. After the German occupation of Prague, Prime Minister Chamberlain had drafted with his own hand, an assurance to the Polish government, dated 30 March 1939: "If....any action were taken which clearly threatened their independence, and which the Polish Government accordingly felt obliged to resist with their national forces, His Majesty's Government and the French Government would at once lend them all the support in their power." One formal alliance was concluded on 25 August, when the two countries agreed to support each other against "any action by a European Power which clearly

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The fourth class consisted of a number of naturalized Canadians of German birth or racial origin who identified themselves with Nazi propagandist activities so that they could not be regarded as loyal citizens of Canada. They were all persons of influence in their communities and were leaders of the Deutscher Bund (the Canadian Society for German Culture).

<sup>23</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 273, p. 231084, "International Security - Measures Taken On The Outbreak of War," 2 December 1939.

threatens, directly or indirectly, the independence of one of them." When the German government did not accede to British demands for the withdrawal of their troops from Polish territory, the United Kingdom honoured her pledge to Poland, and declared war on Germany on 3 September.

Though stating her neutrality, Canada was actually on a war footing. The Defence of Canada Regulations were implemented, with clauses 21 and 24 calling for the arrest, detention and internment of those "acting in any matter prejudicial to the public safety or the safety of the state."<sup>24</sup> Commissioner Wood of the R.C.M.P. was appointed Registrar-General of Enemy Aliens.<sup>25</sup>

That night and in the days thereafter, the R.C.M.P. and local police in various Canadian cities closed in on centres of Nazi sympathy and arrested various suspects under Sections 21, 24, 25(8) of the Defence of Canada Regulations. By 20 October, some 358 individuals of questionable loyalty had been arrested, with the predominant numbers of these being from the metropolitan centres of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Regina.<sup>26</sup> These arrests had a great effect on

<sup>24</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Orders-in-Council, RG 2, 1, Vol. 2003, File 1948G, p. 16, P.C. 2483, 3 September 1939.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., P.C. 2485, 3 September 1939.

<sup>26</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 10, File 4-1-5 (1), Inspector D.C. Saul R.C.M.P. to Director of Internment Operations, 20 October 1939.

the pro-Nazi elements in Canadian society:

It was reported by Germans whose sympathies were anti-Nazi that these arrests came as a salutary shock to the German community in Montreal. The Nazi Party, the Arbeitsfront, and the Bund had always boasted of their power of immunity, especially in Montreal, and ...had told waverers that if they identified themselves with the anti-Nazi organization they would be in danger of arrest as radicals, whereas if they belonged to the Bund they would be secure. As a result of these arrests, there was quite a falling off in the Bund membership in<sup>27</sup> Montreal and in other places in Canada.

With approximately 358 individuals interned, the next question was the keeping, feeding and guarding of these men. This was the role of the Directorate of Internment Operations.

Canadian response to the internment of enemy aliens and prisoners of war in World War II was far more decisive than it had been in the Great War. In 1914, no policy had been laid down in advance, either in Great Britain or in Canada, as to the treatment of enemy aliens in the event of war. A lack of planning and much confusion were evident in the early days of the war. It was not until the war was three months old, and there were some 10,000 aliens interned or on parole that arrangements were made to organize the whole operation. On 6 November 1914, Major-General Sir

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<sup>27</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 273, p. 231085, "Internal Security-Measures Taken On The Outbreak of War", 2 December 1939.



William Otter, K.C.B., C.V.O., was appointed Director of Internment Operations, and with the assistance of the Militia Department and the Dominion and Royal Northwest Mounted Police, he gave internment operations the purpose and organization which they had hitherto previously lacked.<sup>28</sup> In 1939, this position was given to Brigadier-General Edouard de Bellefeuille Panet, C.M.G., D.S.O.<sup>29</sup> The Assistant Director of Internment Operations would be Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Stethem.<sup>30</sup>

Their task was to organize the Directorate of Internment Operations and provide for the establishment of stations or camps in which enemy aliens would be interned.

<sup>28</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Secretary of State Department, RG 6, D1, Vol. 21, p. 1, W.D. Otter to Minister of Justice ("Internment Operations 1914-1920"), 30 September 1920.

<sup>29</sup>Edouard de Bellefeuille Panet was born in Ottawa in 1881. After schooling at Ashbury College and Ottawa University and Royal Military College, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Artillery in 1902. He was consistently promoted, and passed the Staff College in England in 1912-1913. In World War I, he served overseas on the staffs of the 1st and 4th Canadian Divisions, attaining the rank of Adjutant-General in 1919. He was mentioned in despatches six times, and received the D.S.O. (1916), C.M.G. (1918), and Legion d'Honneur (1918). He served as the Honorary Aide-de-Camp to Viscount Willingdon and Earl Bessborough 1926-1934; chaired the Montreal Unemployment Relief Commission 1934-1937; and was Chief of the Department of Investigation of the C.P.R. to 1946.

<sup>30</sup>Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Stethem (30 April 1888 - 8 April 1944) enlisted in 1911 with the Royal Canadian Dragoons, and served overseas in World War I and after the war in Siberia.

Where were these men to be interned? On 25 September 1939, E.H. Coleman, the Under-Secretary of State, addressed a letter to H.R.L. Henry, the private secretary to Mackenzie King, in which he expounded his views on the establishment of internment camps:

So far as we can see at the present, the number of enemy aliens interned will not be large and it is earnestly desired that every possible economy should be exercised in setting up stations or camps. Each camp, as you will recognize, requires a considerable overhead for administration, medical services, the maintenance of guards and the like, and it would be manifestly wasteful to set up this expensive organization in every section of the country. In addition to that, guards and others employed in connection with the camp would not be available for productive national service.... Before making the recommendations, the Director General and others concerned very carefully reviewed the reports of internment operations in the last war... and came to the conclusion that the cost of a system similar to that used, no doubt through inexperience, in connection with the last war, would be unduly expensive and burdensome.<sup>31</sup>

While preparing permanent internment camps for occupation, the Government was to keep internees in receiving stations. These were to be selected on the following basis:

....in the choice of buildings and site, consideration should be given to a) government owned buildings except

<sup>31</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 265, p. 225543, E.H. Coleman to H.R.L. Henry, 25 September 1939.

armouries b) existing government rented accommodation c) suitable buildings which could be rented locally. The building or buildings selected should a) be such that they can be rapidly converted to the required purpose with due regard to economy b) be remote from other accommodation if possible and where they will least attract public attention c) provide temporary accommodation for 40% of the anticipated totals....d) allow for approaches and exits to be readily lighted and guarded by a minimum number of guards.<sup>32</sup>

In the east, Fort Henry at Kingston and the Citadel at Quebec were designated as receiving centres, while in the west, the internment camp at Kananaskis, Alberta was immediately opened for use.

The internee was to be apprehended by the R.C.M.P. or other police force, and delivered into military custody at the designated receiving station. On his arrival there, he was to be searched, documented and held until a sufficient number had been collected for transfer to an internment camp. In establishing an internment camp, the Adjutant-General, Major-General H.H. Matthews specified that the following criteria were to be filled:

the site should not be in easy access of the international border b) the surrounding terrain should be such as to ensure that arrangements for the safe custody of prisoners can easily be set up and maintained with a minimum in military personnel c)...be well

<sup>32</sup> Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, 113.5009 (D14), Major General H.M. Matthews to District Officers Commanding, 21 June 1939.

away from the main traffic routes (road, rail or water) and in a place where it will not attract attention d) consideration should be given... to using existing government or provincial buildings or hutted camps if such are available on a site otherwise suitable e) consideration in choice of a site should also be given to one where productive work of a military or civil nature might be undertaken by the prisoners.<sup>33</sup>

The initial internment camp to be opened in Canada in World War II was at the Kananaskis Forest Experiment Station near Seebe, Alberta. The Department of Mines and Resources had recommended both the Petawawa and Valcartier Forest Experiment Stations as internment camps, since both had forestry work that needed completion. On 11 September, after lengthy discussion, Panet informed the Deputy Minister of National Defence that it was considered desirable to establish internment camps at Kananaskis and Petawawa, and that it was felt that accommodation for 200 men at each camp was sufficient.<sup>34</sup> The tract of land at Kananaskis lay some 50 miles west of Calgary and 30 miles east of Banff, comprising the most northerly portion of the valley of the Kananaskis River. It was accessible by motor car on a good dirt road connecting at Seebe with the main highway between Calgary and Banff. It was 8.5 miles distant

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations Files, RG 6; L, Vol. 11, File 4-3-1, General Panet to Lt.-Col. Desrosiers, 11 September 1939.

from the C.P.R. railhead at Seebe. The camp had originally been the site of an unemployment relief project in 1934. It opened as a receiving station on 7 September 1939 with Major J.W. Stagg as Commandant, and a guard of 29 men. By 10 September, some 118 internees were accommodated there.

The initial establishment of these camps illustrated how one government department used the needs of another in order to accomplish work in its own sector. In a memorandum to Mr. R.A. Gibson, Director of Lands, Parks and Forests Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, Dominion Forester D. Roy Cameron remarked:

The Kananaskis camps are in shape for occupancy now. It is understood of course that the internment authorities will provide beds, mattresses, blankets, dishes, cooking stoves, heaters, and all other camp equipment, and will make the necessary arrangements for supervisory personnel, cooks, etc. They will also have to take care of the cost of purchase of axes, shovels, saws and other working tools. In brief, all this department does is to make the accommodation available. ...It appears desirable to have a clear understanding at the outset of the responsibilities of this department in connection with the work done by enemy aliens. In our opinion, this should be restricted to the definition of the work to be carried out and the necessary inspections to see that operations are conducted in accordance with the plan laid down. All responsibility for the care and discipline of the workers should be with the internment authorities who will make all arrangements in connection with the maintenance of the camps....the Forest Service will, of

course, cooperate in every possible way....<sup>35</sup>

Panet knew that internees, forcibly detained in restricted areas and removed from ordinary activities, would suffer from deteriorating morale. This situation ultimately would lead to discontent, insubordination, a tendency to wanton destruction of property, and would render them difficult to handle. More men would be required to guard them, and the camp would become more expensive to run. Jobs on the Forestry Reserve were of permanent value, served a useful purpose, fit into a comprehensive scheme, and permitted the camps to become self-sufficient. This was one of the goals of the program, through which Panet hoped to cut the costs which the Internment Branch would face. This thought was reflected in a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Desrosiers:

The internment camps we have at the present moment have been selected with a view of finding suitable work for the prisoners - work they can accomplish throughout the year - winter and summer - i.e. forest work.<sup>36</sup>

By October, there were 150 prisoners in the Eau Claire camp at Kananaskis, with the Wasootch Camp ready for use whenever needed. It was noted that on 24 hours notice,

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., D. Roy Cameron to R.A. Gibson, 8 September 1939, p. 2.

See also Charles Camsell to General Panet, 9 September 1939, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., General Panet to Lieutenant-Colonel Desrosiers, 23 November 1939.

some 300 prisoners could be accommodated, but the water supply, lighting system, drainage and latrine accommodations were inadequate for anything over 300 men.<sup>37</sup>

In the east, preparations continued for the take-over of the Petawawa site, for internment operations on the shore of Centre Lake, some 12.5 miles from the Petawawa military camp. Like Kananaskis, Petawawa had been the scene of an unemployment relief project in 1935. The Dominion Forester analyzed the Petawawa situation in a letter to the Director of Engineer Service, Department of National Defence:

Our arrangement is that the camp will be placed on the site of the old relief camp at Centre Lake. At this point we have a fairly large volume of work suitable to be undertaken by interned, aliens, including cordwood operations, construction of a road from Centre Lake to Lemieux Lake, and a planting program....<sup>38</sup>

Again, the Lands, Parks and Forests Branch would define the work to be carried out, and supply the necessary technical supervision to ensure that operations were conducted in accordance with the prescribed plan. The proposed layout called for a capacity of 200 internees, but facilities could be expanded to take 400 or more. The work to be supplied was conducive to completion during the summer, but

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Brigadier General C.E. Connolly to General Panet, 22 February 1940.

<sup>38</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, I, Vol. 11, File 4-3-3, D. Roy Cameron to Brigadier-General E.J.C. Schmidlin, 11 September 1939.

left problems with the onset of winter. As one source commented:

Keeping in mind that this class of labour will not perform any more efficiently than the unemployment camps established on the Petawawa area in 1935, I consider that very little in the way of work will be accomplished this winter, other than the establishment of the camps and provision for fuel for the winter months....<sup>39</sup>

On 26 September, General Panet wired the Quartermaster General and stated that he was "agreeable" to have the camp located at Centre Lake."<sup>40</sup> Arrangements were also made to house another 100 internees because of the large number of suspects in custody at the receiving stations in the east. However, the work on the camps did not proceed at a pace which the authorities wished, and there were delays in establishing the prisoners in these permanent camps. These resulted from the Forestry Department deciding, on its own initiative, to put out tenders for sectional constructed huts. The camp had originally been scheduled to open within four weeks of the 11 September certification that the site was needed, but it was not until the early part of December that the internees from Fort Henry and the Citadel were

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., Memorandum to D. Roy Cameron, 22 September 1939, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 11, File 4-3-3, General Panet to Quartermaster General, Department of National Defence, 26 September 1939.



bussed to Petawawa. Even at this late date, Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Pense, D.S.O., M.C., the Camp Commandant, was aware that the camp was far from complete. It was not until 16 January 1940 that the District Officer Commanding Military District 3 could report:

Since my visit on 21 December 1939, good progress has been made on construction and organization of the camp which may now be considered quite comfortable and suitable for its purpose.<sup>41</sup>

However the internees saw the camps in a somewhat different light. Despite the fact that they were receiving good treatment, the prisoners had one major complaint "that they were being detained..."<sup>42</sup> The interpretations of the Defence of Canada Regulations by the judicial tribunals would measure the length of imprisonment for each citizen. Their fate was now in the hands of these Tribunals.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Brigadier H.F. Boak to the Secretary, Department of National Defence, 16 January 1940.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Col. H. de N. Watson to Headquarters Military District 13, 28 December 1939.

Chapter 2 - Legal Status of Internees And Regulations  
Covering Their Maintenance and Discipline

In establishing the draft Defence of Canada Regulations in 1939, the Committee on Emergency Legislation had unanimously recommended all clauses, save for Regulation 21. The wide, all-encompassing powers that were delegated in this Regulation brought forth questioning comments from members of the Committee who felt that they were too totalitarian for usage, even in wartime, in Canada. Their first report noted:

In the attached draft regulations, Regulations 21 and 22 (Regulation 22 deals with appeals) have been marked with a black line in the margin to draw attention to the fact that it will be necessary for the Cabinet to consider whether such a wide power should be assumed by the Executive and also whether it is expedient to introduce this Regulation at the outset of an emergency or whether its introduction should be postponed until it is known how the situation will develop.<sup>43</sup>

A memorandum by J.F. MacNeill, addressed to the Prime Minister's Office, dated 2 December 1939, concerning measures taken on the outbreak of war, commented:

The Regulation is admittedly drastic.... This, of course, is similar to the powers given to totalitarian governments to arrest persons and detain them without laying any charge against them. The only justification for adopting a Regulation

<sup>43</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J4, Vol. 153, p. c110259, Committee on Emergency Legislation, First Report, July 1939.

of this nature is that in time of war the Executive must assume extraordinary powers in order to prevent the enemy within the country from committing hostile acts which might prove prejudicial to the safety or interests of the state....<sup>44</sup>

In order to counterbalance the harsh effects of Regulation 21 and provide a safeguard against abuse of power, Regulation 22 was inserted, which provided that persons arrested and detained under Regulation 21 be given the right, within thirty days of detention, to appeal the order. This appeal was to be heard by an Advisory Committee consisting of persons appointed by the Minister of Justice, the Chairman of which should be a person of some judicial significance.

This Advisory Committee on Orders of Restrictions and Detentions was accordingly established on 16 September 1939. It consisted of His Honour F.L. Smiley, Judge of the County Court for Carleton County in Ontario, as Chairman; Mr. W.P.J. O'Meara, Assistant Under-Secretary of State; and Mr. Jacques Fortier, Departmental Solicitor of the Department of Transport. It was to conduct hearings upon the appeals of interned enemy aliens from orders of restriction and detention, and to report to the Minister of Justice. Practically every internee appealed his internment. On 10 October, the Committee proceeded to Kingston for three days

<sup>44</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 273, p. 231087, "Internal Security-Measures Taken on the Outbreak of War," 2 December 1939.

to hear appeals, but did not complete its work until 27 October, some 160 appeals later. It then proceeded to Quebec to hear appeals, after which from 20 November, it sat at Kananaskis. On 22 September, Regulation 26 of the Defence of Canada Regulations was constituted, and it permitted aliens interned under Regulations 24 and 25 to petition an Alien Tribunal. These Tribunals consisted of Judges of the Superior Court in the Province of Quebec and all Judges of the County or District Courts in the other provinces. The Committee and Tribunals did not actually release the interned persons, but made a recommendation to the Minister of Justice who was free to act upon the recommendation in whatever way he saw fit. In analyzing the initial arrests in the autumn of 1939, John F. MacNeill noted that:

The first list of persons to be arrested was made out hurriedly in view of the emergency and it may be that some persons were taken into custody who were not actually dangerous to the safety of the state.... Since September 3rd, very much more careful investigation has been made by the Committee in each case than was possible in the first few days of the war, and the Police have been told by the Committee that they must show that any person recommended for arrest under this section is actually dangerous to the safety of the state and cannot be dealt with under the law in any other way....<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 231039.

See also Public Archives of Canada, Department of Justice, RG 13, B II, Vol. 1.

It was hoped that the Advisory Committee and the Tribunals would speed up the process of weeding out those who should not be interned, and return them to their homes so that they might contribute to the war effort.

With the internment of these Canadian civilians, the question arose as to how to deal with their families, and who should support them. In World War I, some 81 women and 156 children accompanied male internees into the camps, and they were also provided with quarters and food.<sup>46</sup>

Though subsection 10 of Regulation 25 of the Defence of Canada Regulations stated that the dependents of an alien could accompany him into internment, it was felt that such a course of action was not feasible in the present conflict. In this case, the question was upon whom the burden should fall for caring for these dependents. It was first suggested that they should be taken care of by the municipalities where the families resided. Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Stethem noted:

It would be necessary to set up an organization such as already exists in the different municipalities to first find out if the family is entitled to relief, then if the Federal Government would undertake

The Advisory Committee recommended the release of 71 internees. Figures for the Tribunals show that at least 6 internees were definitely recommended to be released.

<sup>46</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Secretary of State Department, RG 6, D1, Vol. 21, p. 6, W.D. Otter to Minister of Justice ("Internment Operations 1914-1920"), 30 September 1920.

such an obligation, there is a danger that the municipalities would attempt to have interned all enemy aliens on direct relief.<sup>47</sup>

However, it was decided on 14 October that the Dominion Government would be responsible for the provision of necessities to the destitute families of internees. The Dominion Commissioner of Unemployment Relief, Mr. Harry Hereford, sent the following telegram to all provincial governments:

I am directed by the Minister of Labour to advise you that the Dominion Government will be responsible for food, fuel, clothing, shelter distributed to necessitous persons in the locality. In addition the Dominion will be responsible for health services on the same scale as given to other necessitous persons. Cooperation of municipal and provincial authorities is requested in connection with administration of these services. Expenditures should be segregated from other relief expenses....<sup>48</sup>

This decision was formulated into law with the passage of P.C. 3204 on 21 October 1939. In some cases however, this financial aid was not enough. In a letter to the Director of Internment Operations, the Swiss Consul General, Mr. Jaccard noted that:

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<sup>47</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, I, Vol. 12, File 5-1-4 (2), Lt.-Col. Hubert Stethem to Deputy Minister of Justice, 25 September 1939.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Stethem to District Officer Commanding Military District 5, 16 October 1939.

...there remained and still remains cases where applicants for relief have not yet reached the state of destitution that city relief can be granted. Even those families who receive city relief are sometimes in need of additional assistance....It is in such cases of need that a German committee and myself are undertaking to make small monthly contributions which at present amount to \$3 for wife and 50¢ for each child per month. These subsidies remain therefore within the limit of \$3.50 which the relief commissions permit as weekly side-income in addition to the amounts paid as city relief....It is not my intention to directly distribute those subsidies to the needy families, but I shall resort to church aid organizations and to local German-Canadian welfare or similar agency. In regard to the source of these funds, these are placed at my disposal through the Swiss Legation in Washington and...they are contributed by certain German or American donators in the United States.<sup>49</sup>

Property and finances in the hands of interned enemy aliens became vested in the "Custodian" (Secretary of State) under "Regulations Respecting Trading With The Enemy." On approval from the Treasury Board, the Custodian could invest in securities the money received pursuant to the Regulations. He could also sell, manage and deal with the property that came into his possession. The internees, their property,

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., Swiss Consul General Jaccard to Director of Internment Operations, 12 March 1940.

Under the chairmanship of Dr. Jaccard, a Central Committee for the Assistance of Necessitous German Families was established. During 1940, they received \$6794.65 in donations from the United States.

money and families were well looked after by the Federal Government.

In World War I, treatment of interned enemy aliens was based on the Hague Convention of 18 October 1907, concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land for those captured by the enemy. Both combatants and non-combatants had the right to be treated as prisoners of war, in the case of capture by the enemy. Internees were permitted obligatory work for their own comfort; paid work for Government benefits with working pay of twenty-five cents per day and paid work for private individuals and corporations, with conditions and rates of pay to be settled by those in authority in the camps.<sup>50</sup> In the administration of the camps, the Commandants were guided by "Maintenance of Discipline Among Prisoners of War" which consisted of abstracts from the Royal Warrant of 3 August 1914 and subsequent amendments as well as by "Local Rules For Internment Camps."

The civilian internees in Canada in the winter of 1939-1940 were liable to the treatment meted out in Order in Council PC 4121, dated 13 December 1939 and entitled "Regulations Governing The Maintenance Of Discipline Among And Treatment of Prisoners of War." It was based on the ground rules set forth in the "International Convention

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<sup>50</sup>Some prisoners worked on C.N.R. road gangs and were paid 20 cents per hour and their quarters less 50 cents per day subsistence.



Relative To The Treatment of Prisoners of War", which was concluded at Geneva on 27 July 1929, and ratified by Canada on 20 February 1933. It replaced the interim "Instructions Relating To The Maintenance of Discipline and Treatment of Enemy Aliens Held As Prisoners of War in Internment Camps in Canada", which had been issued to Commandants in September 1939.<sup>51</sup> These regulations were issued "....for the information and guidance of Camp Commandants who are expected to interpret and administer the Regulations in a humane but firm spirit."<sup>52</sup>

P.C. 4121 distinguished between "prisoners of war" and civilians in establishing these regulations. Prisoners were captured in warlike operations or came within the provisions of Articles 1 and 81 of the International Convention. They were to be called "Prisoners of War Class I" in order to distinguish them from enemy aliens or other persons interned under provisions of the Defence of Canada Regulations. The internees, interned as prisoners of war under the Defence of Canada Regulations were not entitled

<sup>51</sup> This document was based upon The International Convention, "King's Regulations and Orders for the Canadian Militia 1939", "Rules For Military Detention Barracks and Military Prisoners 1937", "The Army Act and explanatory chapters of the Manual of Military Law" (especially Chapter XIV).

<sup>52</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 12, File 5-1-2; "Instructions Relating To The Maintenance of Discipline and Treatment of Enemy Aliens Held As Prisoners of War in Internment Camps in Canada."

to the special rights and privileges accorded to "Prisoners of War Class I." However, they still would have been subject to Military Law, thereby affecting the maintenance of discipline and administration. In response to this problem, the Minister of Justice issued an order that persons detained under the provisions of Regulation 21 be treated generally in the same manner as prisoners of war. They would however be exempted from certain articles of the Convention which were only considered applicable to prisoners of war as defined in Articles 1 and 81 of the Convention.<sup>53</sup> Aliens or other persons interned under the Defence of Canada Regulations were to be referred to as "Prisoners of War Class 2." Prisoners of war were to be subject to the law relating to the Armed Forces of Canada.

Some of the articles of P.C. 4121 are noteworthy and bear amplification as they are relevant to the wartime treatment of prisoners and internees. A canteen was to be established in each camp and its organization was to be governed by special instructions issued by the Director of

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<sup>53</sup>Articles 6 (possession of personal effects upon capture), 8 (notification of capture), 9 (placement of camps),<sup>22</sup> (orderlies for officers), 27 (work of prisoners of war), 38 (postage charges on letters),<sup>43</sup> (representatives of the Protecting Power), 44 (prisoners spokesmen and representatives) of the International Convention were to apply to Prisoners of War Class 2 in a modified form. Articles 19 (wearing of badges of rank), 23 (payment of members of the armed forces), 24 (rates of pay of prisoners), 50 (recapture of prisoners), 51 (attempted escape), 68-75 (repatriation and liberation) would not apply to them.

Internment Operations. Prisoners of war were not to be paid for work in connection with the administration, internal arrangements and maintenance of the camp, as well as for the construction and improvement of quarters for their own use. Exceptions could be made on the recommendation of the Camp Commandant in case of prisoners employed as cooks or in other useful capacities, whose employment prevented them from earning money through other labour. The pay rate was fixed at twenty cents per day based on the cash allowance made to members of the labour camps run by the Department of National Defence in the 1930's. Article 34 of the Geneva Convention summarized how the rates of pay were to be arrived at:

Prisoners of war shall not receive pay for work in connection with the administration, internal arrangement and maintenance of camps. Prisoners employed on other work shall be entitled to a rate of pay to be fixed by agreements between the belligerents....Pending the conclusions of the said agreements, remuneration of the work of prisoners shall be fixed according to the following standards: a) work done for the state shall be paid for according to the rates in force for soldiers of the national forces doing the same work, or if no such rates exist, according to a tariff corresponding to the work executed. b) When the work is done for other public administrations or for private individuals, the conditions shall be settled in agreement with the military authorities.

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<sup>54</sup>"Convention Relative To The Treatment of Prisoners of War", concluded at Geneva 27 July 1929. Article 34, p. 62.

Prisoners were not to be employed on work having direct connection with the operation of the war. Prisoners were to mail no more than one letter per week, with P.W. Class 1 having the privilege of free postage, and P.W. Class 2 having similar privileges with modifications established by the Directorate. No access to newspapers was allowed since it was felt that news of Allied defeats would hearten the internees. Representatives of the Protecting Power, i.e. the Swiss Consuls, were permitted to visit prisoners and all parts of the camp occupied and used by prisoners under conditions laid down in Article 86 of the International Convention. As mentioned, they were subject to the laws, regulations and orders in force in the armed forces of the Detaining Power, and the most severe form of disciplinary action would be confinement in the detention barracks for a period not exceeding twenty-eight days.

The one set of regulations for both interned enemy aliens and prisoners of war raised a storm of controversy.<sup>55</sup>

It is interesting to note that when the labour camps were closed, wages were 50 cents per day. Internees in World War I received 25 cents per day.

The wage rate of twenty cents per day was fixed by General Panet without reference to the United Kingdom. As will be noted later, this oversight was used to substantiate the desire to raise wages of P.W. pay in 1943.

<sup>55</sup>The civilian internees under custody did not have the right to claim the privileges of a prisoner of war, as defined in Articles 1 and 81 of the International Convention.

In supporting his view for a uniform set of regulations for both interned enemy aliens and prisoners of war, General Panet quoted from Section 60 of "The Laws and Usages of War on Land" in the Manual of Military Law, 1929 and noted that:

...enemy individuals and...officials  
...are not civil prisoners; they are  
taken into captivity for military  
reasons and they are therefore prisoners  
of war.<sup>56</sup>

Opponents argued that the Committee of Imperial Defence's desire in November 1927 to consider separately an International Convention for the Treatment of Prisoners of War and an International Convention dealing with civil populations who fall into the hands of an enemy, indicated that a distinction between the two categories was considered. Separate regulations for internees existed in England, and United Kingdom authorities felt that enemy aliens were distinct from prisoners captured in warlike operations.<sup>57</sup>

In November 1939, it was decided that the Canadian authorities

However the Canadian Government in P.C. 4121 of 13 December 1939 chose to apply the provisions of the Convention to them, as regarded their general treatment. Thus the internees were quite fortunate to receive free postage and pay for their work.

<sup>56</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 12, File 5-1-2, General Panet to O.D. Skelton, 5 October 1939.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., Canadian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, #580, 28 October 1939.

would allow the Convention to be applied to civilian internees, with the proviso that:

....If however the Government wishes to change the status of these prisoners at any time, it is at perfect liberty to do so and can make such rules and regulations as it may deem necessary under the provisions of the War Measures Act.<sup>58</sup>

Complaints by the prisoners<sup>59</sup> even succeeded in riling General Panet who had wholeheartedly supported the establishment of one set of regulations. A letter to the District Officer Commanding Military District 13 exhibits his chagrin:

....It is quite evident that the prisoners do not appreciate the fact that the Canadian Government has accorded them extremely generous and humane treatment in granting them the privileges of being treated in most regards as prisoners of war. They are not, in any way, entitled to the protection and privileges afforded by the International Convention Relative To The Treatment of

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., W. Stuart Edwards to General Panet, 17 November 1939.

<sup>59</sup>A letter of 27 May addressed to the Minister of Justice from the spokesman of the internees at Kananaskis, set forth their complaints. General Panet pointed out that the internees were not entitled to the protection and privileges afforded by the International Convention. The spokesman complained that the internees did not enjoy all the privileges of interned civilians. General Panet countered by noting that interned civilians had no privileges, no rights and no protection. The internees asked about relief for their families and it was stated that there was no obligation to afford any relief to an enemy alien family. The internees also desired to have their wives in the camps with them, but this request had been denied by the authorities.

Prisoners of War....No Convention exists affording any protection or privileges to interned enemy alien civilians. The Defence of Canada Regulations state that a person detained by order of the Minister of Justice "may be detained in such place and under such conditions as the Minister of Justice may, from time to time, determine". Under these Regulations, therefore, enemy alien civilians could be detained by order of the Minister in public jails, penitentiaries or elsewhere. They need only to be afforded prison food. They need not be given the privileges of free postage. They need not be afforded opportunities for recreation. The pay of a prisoner doing compulsory labour under these circumstances would be 5 cents per day. They need not be given the privilege of using the German language for correspondence. They need not be afforded full dental treatment or any medical treatment beyond bare necessities.... they need not, as enemy aliens, be afforded the protection of the Protecting Power, which is only given as a privilege under the Geneva Convention to actual prisoners of war. Prior to the outbreak of war, neither Canada nor any other country had any agreement with Germany or with any other country as to how she would treat interned enemy alien civilians. Such civilians could have been treated in the same way as civilians are treated in German concentration camps....Canada....voluntarily agreed to afford most of these privileges and this protection to civilian internees. It would have been much simpler to have established rigid concentration camps or used existing penal institutions, bearing in mind that the internees were all persons who had undertaken associations or activities subversive to the welfare of the country which had afforded them

shelter and a home. Certain parts of the Convention could only apply to actual Prisoners of War. It was decided that other portions could only apply in modified form to civilian internees....<sup>60</sup>

The question of the legal status of civilian internees was brought to the fore in December 1939 with the escape from Kananaskis of two prisoners on 7 December. They cut their way through the wire and remained free until their recapture on 12 December. Since theirs was the first escape, the authorities were anxious to prevent a recurrence of this embarrassment. General Panet summarized the views of the Directorate when he commented:

It is considered most important that an example be made at the outset to prevent a recurrence of attempted escapes from the various internment camps....In view of the necessity for an immediate example and the seriousness of the offence, it is considered that both these prisoners should be brought before a military court for trial....The court must realize that both the accused were already undergoing a form of confinement for the duration of the war and any punishment other than imprisonment has little effect. They must realize the necessity of an example being made at the beginning to offset repeated occurrences; which attempts will likely result in prisoners being shot in an endeavour to escape.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Vol. 11, File 4-3-3, General Panet to D.O.C. M.D. 13, 31 May 1940.

See also footnote 53.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Vol. 12, File 5-1-2, General Panet to D.O.C. M.D. 13, 15 December 1939.



The men were tried before a military court in Calgary on 30 January 1940 and sentenced to two years imprisonment without hard labour. Both men appealed their cases, but their appeals were turned down. General Panet noted:

....Any reconsideration of the sentences passed by the Military Court....would be extremely undesirable in the interests of all internees and would seriously affect the future administration of internment camps....<sup>62</sup>

Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Stethem also pointed out that

....The ordinary laws of Canada provide a penalty of two years imprisonment with hard labour for escaping from legal custody in the case of those persons committed to civil penal institutions, so the sentence...was not unduly harsh.<sup>63</sup>

Further escapes by civilian internees were dealt with in a similar fashion. Two prisoners who escaped from Kananaskis in September 1940 were tried before a military court at Calgary, and also sentenced to two years imprisonment.

By the spring of 1940, the numbers of interned civilians under the Defence of Canada Regulations were fairly stabilized. Over 14,000 aliens were registered with the R.C.M.P., and less than 400 Germans were interned.

About 4000 aliens held exemption certificates which showed

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., General Panet to Department of External Affairs, 24 April 1940.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., Lt.-Col. Hubert Stethem to Department of External Affairs, 30 July 1940.

that they were fugitives from the Nazi regime. Canadian officials were satisfied that there was no need for a general round-up.<sup>64</sup> In the camps, the prisoners complained about being incarcerated, and showed their feelings by nicknaming Kananaskis "Kan-a-Nazi."<sup>65</sup> The authorities, on the other hand, went out of their way to show that the prisoners were receiving the best of care. In viewing the internment situation at the end of 1939, Lieutenant-Colonel Stethem pointed out that the prisoners were being treated well, and all evidence seemed to support that stand:

....The principal complaint throughout Canada has been that the prisoners are too well treated. They enjoy privileges that few Canadians enjoy, for example, free postage, importation of food, tobacco, clothing, etc., free of customs duty. They receive exactly the same rations of food as a soldier in the Canadian Active Service Force, cooked by some of the finest German chefs in the country. They are fully clothed at the expense of the Government, given full medical attention and hospitalization if required. Their dependents, if necessitous, are placed on full relief for rent, light, food, fuel, medical attention, the same as the family of any Canadian citizen. Various individuals, organizations and societies are providing them with books, magazines and recreational

<sup>64</sup>F.C. Mears, "No Sweeping Round-Up Planned of Canada's 14,000 Enemy Aliens", Montreal Gazette, 15 May 1940, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup>Lorne Bruce, "Interned Prisoners Rename Camp 'Kan-a-Nazi', Three Deserters Ostracized", Nelson Daily News, 13 March 1940, p. 8.

material....<sup>66</sup>

The newspapers were also quick to take note of the treatment that was afforded the prisoners:

Prisoners in this wartime internment camp Kananaskis are highly satisfied with their treatment and their letters to friends and relatives contain much favourable comment. More than 150 persons of German descent held in this resort-country camp have the best of food, excellent clothing and quarters, enough light work to keep them in fine physical trim and a wide choice of recreational facilities....One prisoner writing to his wife in Canada said: "We are also very well taken care of here, our teeth are looked after without cost - also we get apples and cake. So many here have better eats than at home." Another wrote his wife: "And my time passes quickly. And when we are off work, there is plenty of entertainment with so many men together"....The reporters ate a luncheon from the prisoners' kitchen and it was obvious why the men had gained an average of 10 pounds in weight since being received at the camp.<sup>67</sup> Some gained 25 to 35 pounds....

Internment authorities sought to cut costs and organize the camps in a more efficient manner. On 7 December 1939, the receiving station at Quebec was closed and all prisoners were transferred to Petawawa. In February 1940,

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<sup>66</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 2, File 1-3-1 (2), Lt.-Col. Hubert Stethem to Undersecretary of State, 13 December 1939.

<sup>67</sup>Lorne Bruce, "German Prisoners Highly Satisfied With Alberta Internment Camp Life", Nelson Daily News, 13 March 1940, p. 4.

General Panet recommended the closing of Kananaskis and the transferring of the remaining internees to Petawawa. This would effect a savings of \$8000 per month, and since Petawawa was nearer Ottawa, it could be more easily administered. With internees numbering 315 (147 at Petawawa, 165 at Kananaskis, one at the Kingston Penitentiary and two at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary), and steadily decreasing in number due to releases, Panet felt that it would be better to place them at Petawawa (which could accommodate 400) and keep Kananaskis as a reserve camp.<sup>68</sup> In a return letter on 21 February, E.H. Coleman recommended delaying the question until the end of March. By May 1940, the war situation had deteriorated greatly and Italy was making threatening gestures towards entering the fray. The question was then not one of closing down a camp, but of finding more room:

....Owing to the present situation, it may become necessary to intern many more Germans. We have therefore decided not to move the prisoners of war now interned at Petawawa, to Kananaskis. Should it become necessary to intern enemy aliens of other nationalities, they will be interned with the ones already at Petawawa and Kananaskis, until such time as it is convenient to separate them. It may also be necessary to intern a great number at short notice,<sup>69</sup> in which event, canvas should be used....

<sup>68</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 12, File 5-1-5 (1), General Panet to Dr. E.H. Coleman, 8 February 1940.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., Vol. 11, File 4-3-2, General Panet to Brigadier C.E. Connolly, D.S.O.; D.O.C. M.D. 13, 24 May 1940.

With the steadily worsening plight of Great Britain and Italy's leaning towards entry into the war, the authorities believed that a round-up of German and Italian civilians was imminent. However, no one could have predicted that the situation would deteriorate to the extent that Britain would be in danger of being invaded, and that Canada would be asked to intern prisoners and civilians from Great Britain until the crisis had passed.

Chapter 3 - Internees In Britain And Their Removal To Canada in 1940.

With the deterioration of international relations in August 1939, Great Britain had girded for war. The Government became aware of the 60,000 German and Austrian refugees and the 8,000 Czech refugees in Britain.<sup>70</sup> They planned on no general internment of enemy aliens at the outset, though it was felt that some measure of male internment would be inevitable at an early date. Men with special skills who could offer valuable services would be exempted. Interned refugees would be segregated from other enemy aliens and would be under less severe conditions. No female aliens or children were to be interned. Movement within the country would be controlled and special restrictions would be placed on enemy aliens left at liberty.<sup>71</sup> On 5 September 1939, the Secretary of State for the Home Department announced a review of the cases of all Germans, Austrians and Czechoslovaks resident in the United Kingdom in order to sift out those who might be unfriendly to the country.<sup>72</sup> The aliens appeared before tribunals which classified them

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<sup>70</sup> Angus Calder, The People's War (New York: Ace Books, 1969), p. 150.

<sup>71</sup> Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 279, pp. 235791-235792, Sir Thomas Inship to Mackenzie King, 31 August 1939.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 235899-235901, Anthony Eden to Mackenzie King, 5 September 1939.

according to their loyalty to Britain. "A" class aliens were interned; "B" class were restricted in their movements, and "C" class, which included the vast majority of the refugees, were allowed to go free, and in many cases were employed in vital industries. In May 1940, with the German blitzkrieg sweeping across France and the Low Countries, all "B" and "C" class aliens were interned. With the Italian entry into the war on 10 June, a similar course of action was followed. An internment panic hit Britain because of the reports of Fifth Column activities in the Netherlands and Belgium. The slogan of the day was "intern the lot."<sup>73</sup> As well as the problem of civilian internees and refugees, Britain was holding German combatant prisoners of war, who had been captured in various operations to this time.

The Canadian Government was totally unprepared to accept an influx of prisoners from Great Britain. The authorities had expected to handle only the Canadian civilian internees imprisoned under the Defence of Canada Regulations, and had only the camps at Kananaskis and Petawawa in which to accommodate them. The subject of handling German prisoners from the United Kingdom had only arisen once, in a letter from Dr. E.H. Coleman to O.D. Skelton. In theorizing the possible transfer of German prisoners of war to Canada, Coleman had noted:

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<sup>73</sup>Calder, op. cit., p. 151.

....I would fear that such action might be made the pretext for reprisals against British prisoners of war interned in Germany....it might be fairly argued that the German prisoners of war in England should be obliged to endure any hardships which might be suffered by the population of the British Isles....<sup>74</sup>

This was the last mention of handling German prisoners until the British authorities decided to query the members of the Commonwealth and ask for assistance in disposing of these prisoners.

The British felt that the custody of so many potentially dangerous persons in areas that might soon be the scene of active operations put a serious burden on the authorities, and asked the Canadian Government to accept German and Austrian internees.<sup>75</sup> After a Cabinet War Committee meeting on 5 June, the Canadian Government declined for the present time, but instituted a survey of appropriate sites.<sup>76</sup> The British were unwilling to have delays because

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<sup>74</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, E, Vol. 10, File 4-2-1, E.H. Coleman to O.D. Skelton, 28 February 1940.

<sup>75</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 292, p. 247101, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, 31 May 1940.

See also p. 247122, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, 5 June 1940.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 247118, Mackenzie King to Vincent Massey, 5 June 1940.



the problem had been magnified with the Italian entry into the war. They asked Canada to accept at least 4,000 internees and contemplate handling 3,000 prisoners of war.<sup>77</sup> The Cabinet acceded to the British request and prepared to accept the numbers requested.<sup>78</sup>

More civilians became potentially dangerous with the Italian entry into the war on 10 June 1940. In Canada, the Italian community had been under surveillance prior to 1939, and as in the case of the German civilians, lists had been drawn up of individuals who were to be arrested, as well as organizations and newspapers which were to be outlawed.<sup>79</sup> In 1939, the Canadian authorities had been worried lest any precipitate action against the Italians might prejudice the position of Italy as a possible neutral.<sup>80</sup> With the inception of hostilities on 10 June 1940, arrests of Italian national members of the Fascio, naturalized Canadians who were members of the Fascio (considered dangerous and who should be interned) and naturalized Canadian members of the Fascio whose activities were not

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 247128-247129, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, 7 June 1940.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 247153, Mackenzie King to Vincent Massey, 10 June 1940.

<sup>79</sup> See footnotes 19-21 in Chapter 1.

<sup>80</sup> Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J4, Vol. 228, File 2183, "Plans for the Detention of Enemy Aliens and Certain Naturalized Canadians In The Event of War".

sufficiently dangerous to warrant internment in the first instance, were effected by the order of the Minister of Justice on most of the persons named in the three categories, under the provisions of Regulation 21 of the Defence of Canada Regulations. Other Italians were later interned under Regulation 25(8), for "acting in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the State."<sup>81</sup> The Government also made use of the opportunity to arrest members of the Communist Party of Canada, and other foreign groupings.<sup>82</sup>

The first group of prisoners was scheduled to sail from England on 21 June 1940, and suitable accommodations were needed in order to care for them. On 14 June, there was a meeting held to discuss the handling of the prisoners. The participants realized that there was not enough time to ready the sites needed for the 7,000 prisoners of war. The task was to provide existing buildings as quickly as possible, such as empty factories, mills etc., with facilities for heating, sewerage, lighting and proximity to a railway. A list of likely places was drawn

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<sup>81</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Directorate of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 10, File 3-4-3, Supt. E.W. Bavin to Colonel Stethem, 5 July 1940 and 27 October 1940.

These individuals were "suspected of treasonable or seditious purposes."

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., Supt. E.W. Bavin to Colonel Stethem, 21 June 1940, 26 June 1940, 5 July 1940, 16 July 1940.

up, which if found satisfactory, could accommodate about 9,000.<sup>83</sup> A budget amounting to \$5 million was allotted which would take care of 6,000 prisoners of war for six months. From the list of likely places recommended to the meeting, Fort Henry was again chosen as a suitable spot. With its thick concrete walls, it was ideal from a security standpoint. This time, the whole of the fort was to be used to accommodate the prisoners, whereas at the outbreak of the war, the Canadian civilian internees had been housed in the advance batteries alone. Accommodation was to be provided for a minimum of 500 persons.<sup>84</sup> Another camp was to be established on the property of the Lake Sulphite Company at Red Rock, Ontario, west of Nipigon on the C.P.R. line. It would hold 1,150 internees (later readjusted to a capacity of 1,783) and would take two weeks to prepare at a cost of \$10,000.<sup>85</sup> The industrial farm at Mimico was

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., File 4-2-1(1), Memorandum of Meeting of Friday 14 June 1940.

<sup>84</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Department of the Secretary of State, RG 6, A1, Vol. 207, File 2902 Part VIII-I, Panet to Colonel H. DesRosiers, 11 June 1940.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Panet to Colonel H. DesRosiers, 14 June 1940. The Lake Sulphite Company was in liquidation, but the owners were seeking an American supply order to turn out ammunition, in which case they wanted to complete the camp for operation. After an alternate site (Standard Underground Cable Company in Hamilton) picked by the authorities did not reach fruition, the Crown took over the premises with the agreement that they would vacate on 30 days notice in the event of the liquidators requiring the property.

placed at the disposal of Federal authorities by the Ontario Government. It was formerly used as a reform farm for young men, and had 260 acres of farm land attached. It was decided to house the 350 segregated Nazi leaders here. The Caledon Sanatorium at Gravenhurst was to be an officers' camp, since accommodation in regard to housing and messing these officers had to be on a higher standard than that for other ranks, and space was needed to provide for orderlies etc. The Sanatorium was in excellent condition and could be made ready for use at a very short notice, at a cost of \$5,000-\$6,000.<sup>86</sup> It was decided to accommodate 139 officers and 300 other ranks on these premises. There were no other permanent sites available for the prisoners' arrival, so the remainder were to be put in temporary camps. These included Camp T on the exhibition ground property at Three Rivers, Camp L (Cove Field) in the middle of Quebec City, and Camp S on St. Helen's Island (formerly a fort and later used as barracks).<sup>87</sup>

The first consignment of prisoners left England on 20 June in the DUCHESS OF YORK. The second boatload left England on 30 June in the ill-fated ARANDORA STAR. She was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine on 2 July. Depending

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., Panet to Colonel H. DesRosiers, 17 June 1940.

<sup>87</sup>The Exhibition Grounds in London, Ontario, were planned to house a camp holding 1,500 Italian internees, but it was never used.

on the sources used, varying accounts of the numbers on board and lost are given. Between 1,200 and 1,500 Italian and German internees embarked on the ARANDORA STAR, and between 400 and 613 of them went down with the ship, many of them category "A" internees.<sup>88</sup> The survivors were rescued and returned to England, to be sent out on the third and fourth boatloads. The ETTRICK sailed on 3 July and the SOBIESKI sailed as scheduled on 4 July.

In this fashion, the first 7,000 German prisoners of war had arrived in Canada, as requested by the Canadian High Commissioner in telegram 802 of 7 June to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Three new sites were opened to alleviate crowding in the temporary quarters. Camp E was at Espanola, Ontario, 40 miles west of Sudbury, on the Algoma Eastern Railway line. The camp was on the property of the Abitibi Pulp and Paper Company, and the 1,469 German "other ranks" prisoners were housed in two buildings divided into dormitories. It opened on 14 July, and housed prisoners from the second and third flights. Camp Q was at Monteith, 35 miles south of Cochrane, where the buildings of the Monteith Industrial Farm were placed at the disposal of the Federal Government by the Ontario Government. It housed

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<sup>88</sup> Along with the large loss of life, the authorities also lost the records of many internees. This made it exceedingly difficult to later classify these people, and the authorities had to wait for documents from England.

501 German internees, categories B and C, none considered dangerous, who had arrived on 14 July off ETTRICK. Camp I was on Ile aux Noix, an island located in the Richelieu River about 12 miles south of St. Johns. The 273 category B and C internees who arrived on the SOBIESKI were housed in the refurbished stone buildings of Fort Lennox on the island.

Upon taking stock of these prisoners, the Canadian Government found that the types of prisoners promised in the despatches from England had not been forthcoming. The number of internees was greater than the number expected, and the number of combatant prisoners was correspondingly less. What was more surprising was that there was such a high proportion of B and C category internees, most of whom should never have been sent from England. In his inquiry into the sinking of the ARANDORA STAR, Lord Snell found that no definite instructions had been established as to selecting aliens to be sent to Canada. Classification was based on the principle that the more dangerous individuals should first be deported. Membership in the Fascist Party was the only evidence against many of these people, and many of the deportees were wholly sympathetic to the British cause.<sup>89</sup> Along with the internees came their baggage, approximately

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<sup>89</sup> Great Britain, Parliament, Summary of the ARANDORA STAR Inquiry, conducted by the Rt. Hon. Lord Snell, C.B.E., LL.D., Command 6238, 1940, p. 4.

60-70 tons (2,000 pieces) by April 1941. The guard was not organized to accept this large quantity of unasked-for luggage, and there were cases of looting.<sup>90</sup> The unsorted baggage was stored in a St. John, New Brunswick warehouse. Clearly in light of these developments, some reorganization was necessary prior to the next wave of prisoners.

One of the first moves was to open new camps to separate internees from refugees. It was felt that if grouped together, the hard-core Nazis might exert an unhealthy influence upon the refugees who, despite their treatment, still supported the British cause. One compound was to be established at the Little River camp in the Acadian Forest Experiment Station, some 20 miles east of Fredericton, New Brunswick.. It was built especially for the purpose of housing refugees, and offered work on the forestry reserve. Another camp with a capacity for 600 internees was established on the Dominion Experimental Farm at Farnham, Quebec, some 40 miles east of Montreal and 18 miles from the international border. Two other camps were to be built on the unfinished portion of the Trans Canada Highway, between White River and Schreiber, with each camp to accommodate 600 internees. These had been sites of road

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<sup>90</sup>There were nine courtmartial of the guard on 16 charges of looting. Six of the accused were found not guilty; two cases rules incomplete; and one guilty case quashed on the advice of the Judge Advocate General.

construction camps in the 1930's under the auspices of the Ontario Provincial Government, and the latter body had promised to construct all camps in the district, and supply the tools, equipment, engineering supervision and direction, all at their expense, provided that the prisoners be put to work finishing the construction of the highway.<sup>91</sup> General Panet agreed wholeheartedly with this scheme and commented: "I consider that public opinion will demand that we find sites for prisoners of war and internees where work can be provided."<sup>92</sup> Aside from the availability of work on these sites, they were also favourable to the Directorate from a security standpoint. While on an inspection tour, Major D.J. O'Donahoe commented:

One good feature about the location of both these camps is that, particularly in winter time, it would be practically impossible for an escaping prisoner to survive, and certainly his only area of movement towards a settlement would be the C.P.R. right of way....<sup>93</sup>

Another site was at Newington, outside Sherbrooke, Quebec,

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<sup>91</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 29, File 11-5-1, Major D.J. O'Donahoe to Director of Internment Operations, 19 September 1940.

<sup>92</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of Secretary of State, RG 6, A1, Vol. 207, File 2902 Part VIII-I, Panet to Colonel H. DesRosiers, 12 July 1940.

<sup>93</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 30, File 11-2-100, Inspection of Major D.J. O'Donahoe, 19 September 1940.



on the property formerly occupied by the Canadian Atlantic Repair Shops. Capacity was to be between 700-800 men, and they would be housed in three large steel and brick construction buildings forming the main body of the compound. Alternate sites were suggested, but for the present time these were acceptable to the authorities.<sup>94</sup>

The Directorate also sought to make its operation more efficient and thus facilitate the handling of the expected influx of prisoners from overseas. At the outbreak of hostilities, it had been located on the second floor of the West Block, in order to allow for easy communications with the Department of Secretary of State. When these quarters became insufficient, they moved in December 1939 to new premises on Bank Street. However, the increased amount of paperwork occasioned by the arrival of the prisoners from the United Kingdom necessitated a move from the Bank Street quarters, and the Directorate took up new residence on the second floor of the Monument National Building at the corner of George and Dalhousie Streets. By November 1940, the ground and top floors were occupied by the Base Army Post Office, which did the censoring of the

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<sup>94</sup>These included Camp Z, on the Trans Canada Highway between White River and Schreiber near Bremner; Camp O, offered by the Quebec Government on the Brompton Farm near Brompton, Quebec; and Camp V at Valcartier which was turned down as being too close to the Dominion Arsenal and Magazine.

prisoners' mail.

Another change which helped improve the administration in the camps was the establishment of the Veterans Guard of Canada to replace the Canadian Provost Corps (Military Police) in guarding internment camps. The authorities had decided to form a special corps of World War I veterans to be used for guard duties wherever needed. On 24 May 1940, the Veterans Guard of Canada was born. It was initially to consist of twelve companies of 250 men each, but almost immediately surpassed that number. It reached its peak in June 1943 when its active strength was 451 officers and 9,806 other ranks, covering seventeen internment camp staffs in Canada.<sup>95</sup> A separate Director was appointed to administer the Corps, and the man to fill this position was Colonel H.R. Alley, O.B.E.<sup>96</sup> The age limit

<sup>95</sup> C.P. Stacey, Six Years of War - The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer, 1955), p. 151.

<sup>96</sup> Born in Toronto on 30 March 1892, Herbert Ruttan Alley enlisted in the Queen's Own Rifles in 1908 and was first commissioned in the militia as a lieutenant in 1912. He went overseas with the Third Battalion C.E.F., and served in Belgium and France in 1915-1916. He was promoted to Captain in 1915 and to Major in 1916. After being wounded at Courcellette, he was appointed to the War Office staff, and later named to the staffs of Lord French and Sir William Robertson. He was awarded the O.B.E. in 1918. On his return to Canada, he was called to the Bar of Upper Canada, and from 1929-1932, he was O.C. the Toronto Regiment. He was appointed O.C. the Veterans Guard on 13 August 1940.

With the unit badge being a lion rampant (a Scottish lion), the Guard called itself the "Alley Cats." After Colonel Alley's retirement and replacement by Colonel J.M. Taylor M.C.,

for enlistment was first set at 49 years, but a number of older men managed to get in, including some veterans of the Boer War. The Veterans Guard patrolled the enclosure, and watched the wire from the guard towers surrounding the camp. Their work freed the younger men in the Provost Corps to go overseas.

The next task for the Canadian Government was to petition that the internees be sent back to England, especially those B and C class refugees who should never have been sent to Canada in the first place. General Panet noted in a letter to Major G.A.I. Dury (one of the British liaison officers who had accompanied the internees to Canada):

...while Canada agreed to accept prisoners of war and dangerous enemy internees requiring close custody, there has been sent to this country a very large category of "C" internees, Jewish and other refugees, Norwegian, Dutch and Spanish citizens, also a large number of refugees who had applied for permission to enter the U.S. and whose names were on the various quota lists. Up to date we have received 164 officer prisoners of war, 1,794 prisoners of war (other ranks), approximately 2,155 pro-Nazi internees. Total 4,113. The remainder, approximately 2,250 including 401 Italian internees whose cases have never

the name became "Taylor's Toothless Tigers."

For the best source of the Veterans Guard, see Directorate of History Department of National Defence, File 113.3P4/02 (D1) - Papers Received From Major H. Smith (Retd.) describing the function and responsibilities of the Veterans Guard of Canada.

been reviewed or examined by the Tribunals, are of the refugee type and include a large number of school-boys, college undergraduates, priests, rabbis, etc. The Canadian arrangements are such that these 2,250 persons cannot be suitably accommodated or administered under existing conditions and it is very questionable as to whether it is desirable to set up special arrangements for enemy alien refugees in Canada. It is considered that these people should not have been sent out to Canada and that it would be much better if they were replaced by a similar number of prisoners of war or dangerous enemy alien internees who can be kept in custody under the disciplinary regulations that exist in Canada for enemy alien camps.<sup>97</sup>

British civilian internees and refugees in Canada came under the jurisdiction of the Home Secretary at the Home Office in London. Communications flowed between Ottawa and London in an attempt to rectify the situation, and the report of Vincent Massey proved once again the problems that had occurred in England:

....."B" and "C" categories of German and Austrian internees....are persons not regarded as individually or even potentially dangerous....So far as concerns category "C" internees sent to Canada, their case would have been reviewed had they remained in this country and some would have been exempted from internment....United Kingdom Government will supply information as soon as possible of each

<sup>97</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 10, File 4-2-1 (1), Panet to Major G.A.I. Dury, 3 August 1940.

civilian internee sent to Canada, with all the facts known about him in this country....When further information is received about individuals, Canadian Government will, no doubt wish to separate refugees from non-refugees, and to consider whether it would not be possible, while keeping potential dangerous internees under strict custody, to apply less rigid treatment to genuine refugees from Nazi oppression. United Kingdom Government propose to review cases of categories "B" and "C" German internees and Italians who have been sent to Canada with a view to authorizing their release in proper cases. Arrangements will be made to return to this country any person whose release is authorized, unless the Canadian Government are prepared to allow them to remain at liberty in Canada and they themselves wish to be there.<sup>98</sup>

The authorities allowed a reasonable number of these men to stay in Canada, provided that they filled the qualifications necessary for entrance into the country.

The final step towards organizing a more efficient operation before accepting more prisoners from England was to segregate the refugees from the internees. The majority of refugees from Camp I were sent to Newington and Farnham, while the pro-Nazis were shipped to Mimico. Camp I had been viewed as unsatisfactory, because its exposed position in the middle of the city had allowed civilian access from all

<sup>98</sup> Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 292, pp. 247277-247278, #1257, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, 30 July 1940.

sides. There was no space for recreation, and the opportunity for work was quite limited. After the departure of its occupants, Cove Field was closed having served its purpose. Camp R at Red Rock was another intolerable situation, with both Nazis and anti-Nazis intermingled. In his "morale report" on the situation in the camp, the British liaison officer Captain K. Kirkness R.A. noted:

....Camp R is what has been described as a "mixed camp" which means that at present there are both kinds of Germans. Those who are for Hitler and those who are not. Although this sounds a quite simple and clear-cut division, in Camp R the mixture is by no means a straightforward one of two ingredients. The Hitler group can be divided into a) radical out and out Nazi Socialists b) recognizable but mild supporters of Nazi Socialism c) those who are National Socialists not from conviction but for personal convenience and d) those who are secretly opposed to Nazism but who purposely conceal their opposition for fear of bringing ruin upon themselves and their relations. The Anti-Hitler group contains no less than 15 distinct types of prisoners. It contains genuine refugees; near Communists; political fugitives; police fugitives; adventurers; currency smugglers; International Trade Unionists; and possibly a few Nazi agents in sheep's clothing. Numerically it is computed that out of some 1,400 prisoners, 85% admire Nazi Socialism while about 15% regard it with utter horror and loathing....Approximately 900 of the prisoners are seamen.... More than 200 of these seamen are under twenty....

<sup>99</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 26, File 10-2-2, Captain K. Kirkness to Headquarters, M.P. 10, 26 November 1940.

With a mixture blended in that fashion, there is no problem understanding the headaches that the authorities had in attempting to analyze the political leanings of each prisoner. Camp R had the same problems as Camp L -- it was too congested and there was no space for exercise. Camp I housed the 273 German Jews; while Camp T at Three Rivers held 717 Category B and C German and Austrian Jews. The latter was unsatisfactory to the Directorate, and with Military District 4 clamouring for the return of the property in order to house troops, it was decided to spread the populace between Newington and Little River. Camp Q at Monteith held a mixture of Jews and non-Jews sufficiently alike in their political philosophy to make their incarceration in one camp tolerable for all concerned. Farnham consisted of refugees from Camps L, B, Q; while Camp N was made up of parts of Camps L and Q. Camp M at Mimico housed the German merchant seamen; while Camp S served as home to the Italian prisoners. Camp F at Fort Henry had held civilian internees, but they were transferred to Monteith and Mimico, and Fort Henry was pressed into service as an officers' camp because of the security that its ramparts offered, and because of the repeated attempts by the German officers to escape from Gravenhurst. Espanola was to house German other rank prisoners; while Calydor was the principal officers' camp. When they were to open in January 1941, Camp W was to be an

officers' camp, and Camp X was to be an "other ranks" camp. Petawawa was still the refuge of Italian civilian internees, and Kananaskis handled the same types of Germans. The segregation of the Italian and German Canadian civilians had taken place in the summer of 1940 in order to facilitate the handling of the prisoners, and to keep the Italians away from the more ardent Nazis.

So by the late autumn of 1940, the Canadian military authorities had fairly stabilized the internment camp situation. Combatants and non-combatants were separated; as were internees and refugees. The latter grouping had been separated into three camps -- three Jewish, one Gentile and one Italian. The Directorate was ready to handle any new influx of prisoners sent over by the British Government. The smooth functioning of the camps settled down into a constant squabbling with the German officer prisoners over camp conditions and attempts to isolate the refugees. It is to this last problem that we now turn our attention.



#### Chapter 4 - The Refugee Problem And Its Ultimate Alleviation

While caring for the refugees and attempting to facilitate their return to England, the Directorate of Internment Operations faced two questions: Who were these people and why did the British authorities transfer them to Canada? They composed a great cross-section of the English populace, and came from all walks of life. Vincent Massey's Cable 808 of 10 June and others had led the Canadian Government to believe that the internees were dangerous characters, but this judgment was completely wrong. The cases of the various individuals are interesting in themselves. Some refugees had escaped to Norway, and had been granted asylum there. With the fall of Norway in the spring of 1940, they were evacuated in order to prevent their falling into German hands. They were interned on disembarkation in Britain and re-embarked to Canada before the circumstances of their cases could be examined. There were 36 refugees at Camp T (and another 39 at Camp Q) from Czechoslovakia, officially recognized as refugees from Nazi oppression, and under the care of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund (formerly the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia). This organization was semi-official and was based on a White Paper containing an agreement between H.M. Government and the Czech Government, prior to Hitler's invasion in 1939. The refugees received an invitation to come to England, and per-

mission to land was granted after careful investigation of individual cases in both Prague and London. The two governments pledged to pay a sum of £200 to each refugee in the case of re-emigration from Great Britain.<sup>100</sup> There were 24 Dutch internees at Camp T who had left Holland because of the German invasion. Some 700 internees at Camp B had reputedly registered for emigration to the United States. Camp B was also the home for 60 members of the Jewish Zionist organization Hebalutz (which the British Government had given permission to receive job training in England prior to being sent to work on farms in Palestine). The organization had brought these 60 students, all under the age of 20, to England to escape the anti-Jewish oppression in Europe, and then interned them as a temporary measure. Twenty-six German refugee undergraduate and graduate students at the University of London were also interned. Other cases were even sadder in that there was no reason to intern these people. Twenty-one men living in Leeds were classified as "refugees from Nazi oppression" and exempted from internment, though not from restriction on movement. They applied for a reconsideration of their case, and an Advisory Committee presided over by Mr. Pailey Scott K.C. started a reconsider-

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<sup>100</sup> The Trust Fund was administered by trustees chosen by H.M. Government. The Director of the Fund was Sir Henry Bunbury. Their aim was to get the refugee out of Czechoslovakia and to England; and supply him with enough money to re-emigrate to another country.

ation in April 1940. Of those whose cases were dealt with, the majority were exempted from these special restrictions and classified as Category C internees. However, the Committee had taken up cases in alphabetical order and had proceeded only as far as the letter "G" when by order of the Home Secretary of 16 May 1940, all "B" aliens were interned. Those whose surnames began with the letters H-Z did not have the opportunity of appearing before the Tribunal to be re-classified.

Bad luck is personified in the case of internees aboard the SOBIESKI. They had been refugees from Austria and Germany, picked out by delegates of the Jewish Relief Organization in Vienna and Berlin as early as October 1938 on instructions from the Home Office that they had either to be selected from amongst the victims of German concentration camps or threatened by the Gestapo, who had the possibility of a further emigration from the United Kingdom within a reasonable period of time. They were different from all the other immigrants into the United Kingdom in that the landing permits on their passports contained a special paragraph (#14) which stated that holders had to proceed to the Kitchener Camp at Richborough, near Sandwich, Kent, and stay there until their re-emigration from the United Kingdom came due. The Kitchener Camp was one of the first refugee camps organized in England, and was under the

care of Lord Reading. It had been a soldiers' camp during the Great War, housing 4,000 men, and it was rebuilt by its new occupants. On the outbreak of the war, these men had enthusiastically enlisted for the National Service - filling sandbags, supplying blood etc. In October 1939, Lord Reading addressed the men and appealed to them to join H.M. Forces. Hundreds became the first refugees to enrol with the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (A.M.P.C.). Conduct in the camp was so good that paragraph 14 of the permits was cancelled by the Home Office. One hundred and eighty-two men worked with the Radio Security Service (Sub Station A) at Sandwich, Kent, monitoring German stations. However, with Kent being declared a protected area, the camp was evacuated on 25 June 1940 and the occupants were moved to Mooragh Internment Camp on the Isle of Man for five weeks. From there, they were sent on to Canada.

These were the types of people that were sent to Canada in 1940. General Panet commented in a letter to the Secretary of State:

....It will be noted that there are 1,746 Jews and 364 of other nationalities, all of whom considered themselves refugees while in the custody of Great Britain. These internees represent at least thirteen different nationalities. They include a large number of schoolboys and young men, of whom approximately 600 range from 16-20 years of age. Also included in this group are eight Protestant clergymen, fifteen Roman

Catholic priests, eleven Roman  
Catholic lay brothers, four rabbis  
....At Camp T, there are 124  
orthodox Jews, including thirty-  
two rabbinical students and their  
lecturers.<sup>101</sup>

The refugees themselves resented being called "prisoners of war." At Camp L, when given official note paper upon which to write, they erased the words "prisoners of war" and inserted "civilian internees" on the letterhead.<sup>102</sup> At other camps, they refused to see the Swiss Consul General, as the representative of the Protecting Power representing German interests. For example at Camp T, the Swiss Consul was handed the following statement through the Camp.

Commandant:

The elected spokesmen of Camp T have passed unanimously the following resolution: "As refugees from Nazi oppression, we feel compelled to refuse the good services offered by the Swiss Consul in his capacity as representative of the German Government. We do not wish to maintain any relations whatsoever with the Third Reich."<sup>103</sup>

This same attitude was held by refugees in Camps I, N, B and A (save for three internees who were later transferred out

<sup>101</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, I, Vol. 17, File 5-2-8, Panet to Secretary of State, 12 August 1940.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., Vol. 30, File 11-2-11, Panet to Secretary of State, 12 August 1940.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., Vol. 30, File 11-2-16, Inspection of General Panet, 8 August 1940.

of the camp). The British liaison officers, detailed by the War Office to accompany the prisoners to Canada, were all of the opinion that these people had been discriminated against, and that they should be returned to England as soon as possible.

The British decision to review the cases of the B and C category internees was caused by a change in public opinion to anger against the harsh measures taken against the refugees. One of the chief complainants was The New Statesman and Nation which noted:

....These antics cannot be explained by an outbreak of xenophobia amongst the common people of England....The crime of the Home Office, which is liberal in sympathy, was that it surrendered weakly to the War Office, which decided without reason to look among refugees for the Fifth Column....<sup>104</sup>

H.M. Government set forth a new White Paper (Command 6223 Civilian Internees of Enemy Nationality) to replace the earlier White Paper (Command 6217 German and Austrian Internees), and it included 18 categories for the release of Category C internees if their cases fell within these certain prescribed categories. One of the new categories was the possibility to enlist in the A.M.P.C. Prospective candidates were to be examined by Canadian medical authorities in order to ascertain their fitness. The Home Office also

<sup>104</sup>The New Statesman and Nation, 10 August 1940.

sent over Mr. Alexander Paterson as their representative, with "sufficient powers to dispose of some hundreds of cases without individual reference to London..."<sup>105</sup> He was sent over in response to a request from the Secretary of State for External Affairs:

.....Action has already been taken to separate in different internment camps category "A" Germans and Austrians from category "B" and "C" Germans and Austrians.....the mere fact that an individual is held in category "B" or "C" cannot be taken as decisive as to whether he is potentially dangerous and therefore any action taken to apply a "system of less rigid custodial treatment" cannot be based solely on present categories. It follows that the classification of civilian internees sent to Canada...can only be made on an examination of the background and information regarding each individual. There is also the point that all these categories were sent to Canada by the United Kingdom under exactly the same conditions as to guard and restraint, and the Canadian Government has received and holds them at the request and for the United Kingdom Government without distinction as to degree of restraint and the Canadian Government does not feel that it should take the responsibility for now relaxing custodial restrictions without the definite participation and direction of some authorized representative of the United Kingdom Government .....some authorized and informed representative of the United Kingdom Government should come to Canada....<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 5-2-9 (2), O.D. Skelton to Vincent Massey, 23 November 1940.

<sup>106</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 292, #1486, Mackenzie King to Vincent Massey, 23 September 1940, pp. 247340-247341.

So while the machinery to free the internees started from immobility, the Canadian Government worked towards easing the lot of the refugees, and helping to keep them occupied until their cases were judged. Category B and C internees were segregated into three Jewish Camps (Camps A, I, N); one Gentile camp (Camp B) and one Italian camp (Camp S). It was decided to accord them certain additional privileges not given to category "A" internees, i.e., radios, movies, more books, telegrams, and two letters per week (not written on prisoner of war letterhead). Major D.J. O'Donahoe, Commandant at Camp S, felt that these actions would be an aid in boosting the morale of the refugees:

I am perfectly confident that the simple privilege of being classified as "refugee" rather than as prisoner or internee would be considered by practically every individual as in itself a very worthwhile thing, removing, as it would, a stigma which an individual would feel having to be classed as a prisoner. In the operation of the camps, every reasonable consideration would be given to allowing the refugees to manage their own affairs. In this way, they would all feel that they had a voice in their own welfare rather than being ordered around, which they are presently subject to. Care should be taken in the selection of Camp Commandants at Refugee Camps who would be there primarily as administrator and advisor and as a link between the Government supply services and the camps, and would no doubt engender a good spirit amongst the refugees.

107 Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 17, File 5-2-8, Major D.J. O'Donahoe to General Panet, 20 September 1940.



With ~~idle~~ time on their hands, the refugees had nothing to do until their release was authorized. The competent Canadian authorities decided to work these people in the interim. This question had originally arisen in the United Kingdom when the Germans inquired through the American Embassy in Berlin if civilian internees in England were required to do manual labour with or without compensation, and if this labour was applied uniformly or if prisoners were divided into various categories corresponding to the status of military prisoners. The British response was that:

...H.M. Government in the United Kingdom as already stated considers that interned civilians should be treated only in accordance with the principles of the 1929 International Convention Relative To The Treatment of Prisoners of War and that the Convention in its entirety is not and cannot be made applicable to civilian internees, especially those relating to compulsory manual or other work. Further it is not feasible to divide civilians into categories....<sup>108</sup>

However, the Canadian authorities were allowed to have the German internees work on the various projects despite the British fear that:

...in view of the number of British subjects now interned in German controlled territory, British internees might be harshly treated if any loopholes were given the Germans by departure from voluntary principle by obliging German internees to

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-1-6, Lord Halifax to Joseph Kennedy, 25 July 1940.

work.<sup>109</sup>

Working conditions were to be set according to the Geneva Convention, with pay to be 20¢ per day on projects outside camp duties. Most of the camps were located in districts where useful work could be performed on projects not associated with the war effort. Civilian internees at Kananaskis and Petawawa had been toiling on the forestry reserves. Camp B at Little River, New Brunswick offered the same type of employment. The Dominion Forester, D. Roy Cameron summarized the types of work that the internees accomplished on that site:

In August of last year the internees arrived at the camp at Little River.... The internees were not a good type of labourer; many of them were highly educated and had never done labouring of any sort; many others were the schoolboy age between 16 and 18 and knew nothing about labouring. It was necessary to have to organize the work from the ground up, to teach the men the use of tools, to teach them the necessity of the work that was being done, and as far as possible to instruct them in the value of the work being planned, the obtaining of fuelwood. Spading the nurseries would normally have cost \$500; but it only cost \$200-\$300, and only due to the inexperience of the workers.... In connection with some of the thinning operations, there were areas that would cost, if we were using local labour, as high as \$17 per acre for the silvi-cultural work involved. The fuelwood

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-2-3, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #1157, 17 July 1940.

obtained for the camps from such operations would pay for the additional silvicultural work, so that over much of the area we are improving the forest without cost to the Dominion Government. ....All of this was work that should have been done, but work that could not have been done with our present appropriation if we had not had the available internee labour....<sup>110</sup>

Monteith, Mimico and Farnham were all located on farms, where prisoners could be usefully employed in harvesting the crops. At Farnham, the Camp Commandant noted:

At the present time, prisoner personnel at Camp M are being employed daily in pulling weeds and similar work on the farm lands appurtenant to the buildings which constitute the camp quarters and which embrace about 260 acres. The removal of these weeds benefits various crops of vegetables etc. planted earlier in the year by former inmates of the Ontario Reformatory<sup>111</sup> as this institution was then known....

The camps at Ile aux Noix, Newington and St. Helen's Island did not have as much acreage as the other camps to ensure gainful employment for their residents. However General Panet, with the cooperation of Major D.J. O'Donahoe decided to establish a Works Program whereby the internees would be employed on manufacturing projects at the camps. Major O'Donahoe realized the potential working force at his

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-1-5, D. Roy Cameron to Hubert Stethem, 20 May 1941.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-2-3, Lt. Col. R.S.W. Fordham to Director of Internment Operations, 3 August 1940.

disposal:

...with the exception of approximately 20-25% of the internees (who would normally be required for camp fatigues and duties), work had to be found for the balance. I further explained... that in the spring and summer time, a limited number of internees, probably not more than 50 in each camp, could be employed on agricultural work at Camps I and A, but with this exception there was no work...other than the work outlined in our works program and having to do with light manufacturing and woodworking and with the production of the articles which these occupations imply, particularly articles which were simple to make and which were required in great quantities by the army....everything to do with the Works Program would be done by the internees themselves, subject to supervision by the Camp Commandant and subject to direction from this Headquarters....we agreed that the time when there would be an actual shortage of civilian labour was rapidly approaching....in the fields in which we proposed to operate, the firms presently engaged on articles for the army were reputedly working at high pressure and were behind on deliveries; further the articles which we propose to produce will represent only a fraction of the quantities....<sup>112</sup>

What O'Donahoe envisioned was a Works Program using the skills possessed by many of the internees, and calling for light manufacturing of netting and the cutting and sewing of textiles. This program would cover the Jewish internment

<sup>112</sup> Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File 164.009 (D79), Memorandum of Major D.J. O'Donahoe re Works Program, Internees Categories B and C, 12 November 1940.

camps at Farnham, Newington and Ile aux Noix, and the Italian camp on St. Helen's Island. Remuneration was to be 20 cents per day, and since these people were not prisoners of war, they could be employed on work more closely connected with the war effort. Workshops were erected at the camps, covering a ground area of approximately 40' x 120', and were divided by a partition 40' from one end, resulting in two shops under one roof - one shop 40' x 40' to be used in light manufacturing and the other 40' x 80' to be used for woodworking. These workshops were constructed by the internees. Products turned out included fly nets, camouflage netting, shoes, internees' pants, bayonet practice racks, used razor blade boxes and screen doors.

At first, the program got off to a slow start, and the workshops did not open until January 1941. They were plagued by the lackadaisical attitude of the Jewish internees, whose desire not to work retarded the growth of the program. However, once the workshops were finished and the orders started flowing in from the Ordnance Branch of the Department of National Defence, it was found that the program was most successful. The Director of Internment Operations noted:

The Works Program...has materially expanded since its initiation and there is marked evidence of considerable further expansion. The Works Program is booked up with orders for some months ahead, but

has I believe justified its existence in terms of the services it has been able to render to the Ordnance Department.<sup>113</sup>

As of 30 June 1941, approximately 900 men were employed at the four camps. At Farnham, 400 men were employed on wood-working, sewing, knitting, netting, farming and drafting. At Ile aux Noix, 160 were employed on netmaking. At Newington, 200 men were working on woodworking, sewing, knitting, netting and shoe repairing. One hundred and forty men worked on woodworking, sewing and farming (on Isle Ronde) at St. Helen's Island. The three manufacturing plants were a little slower in getting off the mark because shipments of machinery and tools promised in December 1940 and January 1941 were not received until March 1941. The three plants handled a diversified line of woodworking products, clothing, kitbags, holdalls and pillow cases. The speed in which the orders were handled, processed and shipped, was favourably commented upon by the Ordnance, Munitions and Supply and Contract Branches. Financially, the Works Program was also a success. For example, the profit on sales for June 1941 was \$8,036.41.<sup>114</sup> Major O'Donahoe was pleased to note that after three months of operations

...the entire investment in the Works

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., Hubert Stethem to Adjutant General, 21 June 1941.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., Captain R.L. McMillan to Major D.J. O'Donahoe, 14 July 1941.

Program machinery, equipment etc. has now been written off and hereafter, the Works Program should contribute a fairly substantial sum per month to the National Treasury....<sup>115</sup>

In fact, the financial benefits from the Works Program in 1941 were lucrative enough to demand a resumption of the program in the following year. The 1942 version saw an increased emphasis placed upon farming at Ile aux Noix, Farnham and St. Helen's Island. Farming had been carried out in 1941 and some 300 tons of vegetables had been harvested. In 1942, some 600 tons constituted the crop, which was handed over to the District Supply Officer at cost, thus saving the country a considerable amount of money in providing rations.

In summary, the Works Program was a success in that it kept refugees gainfully occupied; it permitted them to earn money with which to finance any purchases they deemed necessary from the camp canteen; it did not leave them idle time with which to contemplate their fate; it gave the government materials and crops that it would not have received otherwise; and it provided a profit for the program as a whole. All in all, it was quite successful, and though no one knew it at the time, it served as a basis for the larger scale labour projects that emerged in 1943 because

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<sup>115</sup>Ibid., Major D.J. O'Donahoe to General Panet, 19 July 1941.

of the lack of labourers in Canada.

In the meantime, the Government had extended to the refugees, through an Order-in-Council<sup>116</sup>, the same benefits as prisoners of war received under P.C. 4121 of 13 December 1939. Refugees were to be referred to as "Prisoners of War Class 2" to distinguish them from prisoners of war captured in warlike operations. A "Central Committee For Interned Refugees" was established in January 1941, on the same basis as the organization established in England. Senator Cairine Wilson agreed to act as chairman, with Miss Constance Hayward and Mr. Saul Hayes (National Executive Director, United Jewish Refugee and War Relief Agencies) as joint secretaries. This unofficial body was created to represent the various voluntary organizations in Canada that were concerned with the welfare of refugees. These bodies were so numerous that the Directorate was forced to deal with only the authorized representative of the Central Committee, who would act as a liaison officer between the Directorate, the refugees and the relief organizations.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>116</sup>P.C. 2899, 2 July 1940.

<sup>117</sup>Beside the authorized representative of the Central Committee, only the Swiss Consul General, the representative of the International Red Cross, and the War Prisoners Aid of the International Y.M.C.A. had any access to the camps. The War Prisoners Aid was formed because so many people sought to open libraries and donate games for the prisoners that the Directorate was swamped with requests. Many other groups and individuals sought to donate materials to ease the lot of the prisoners and civilian refugees. These included Principal E.W. Bradin of Frontier College who offered to send ship-



At this time, Mr. Alexander Paterson was in Canada as representative of the Home Office to check into the various cases, and recommend release or continued internment of the internees. Since the refugees were in Canada at the express desire of the British authorities, the Canadian Government could not recommend their removal until the Home Office had reached a decision on their cases. This could only be done on the recommendation of the authorized representative of the British Government, in this case, Mr. Paterson. Those who were freed and desired to stay in Canada had their cases analyzed by the Canadian authorities. Government policy was that:

...application to remain in Canada, on the part of internees whom the United Kingdom Government were prepared to release, should be investigated individually, with a view to reaching just and humane decisions and granting admission where good faith could be established and arrangements made as to maintenance.<sup>118</sup>

Since refugee camps had been established in a completely different fashion from prisoner of war internment camps, the Canadian Government decided to make the two separate entities.

ments of 100 or more books and magazines at a time; the German Society in Montreal which provided recreational equipment; the Kyffhaeuser Bund (League of German War Veterans in the United States) which desired to send comforts; the German Red Cross; the American Committee for the German Relief Fund Inc. (N.Y.); the Brazilian Red Cross which sent comforts, clothing, relief goods.

<sup>118</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Minutes of Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Vol. 4, Minutes of Tuesday 13 May 1941.

By P.C. 4568 of 25 June 1941, the Secretary of State, with the concurrence of the Minister of National Defence, appointed an officer to be known as Commissioner of Refugee Camps, who was to report to the Secretary of State. The man chosen to fill this role was Lieutenant-Colonel R.S.W. Fordham.<sup>119</sup> Another Order-in-Council<sup>120</sup> was passed which set forth regulations for the treatment and care of these refugees. These were basically the same rules as set forth in P.C. 4121 for Prisoners of War Class I, save that they were less stringent in nature.

By November 1941, the number of refugees remaining in Canada had lessened sufficiently so that only three sites were designated as refugee camps - Farnham, Ile aux Noix and Newington. During 1942, there was a steady stream of refugees who had been conditionally released and granted temporary admission into Canada under the provisions of the Immigration Act for the purpose of residing and working, or

<sup>119</sup>Reginald Sydney Walter Fordham was born in London, England on 9 May 1897. After an education at Niagara Falls Collegiate Institute, University of Toronto and Osgoode Hall Law School, he served overseas with the Canadian infantry in France in World War I. He was promoted to Captain in 1917, wounded and mentioned in despatches. He was gazetted as Lieutenant-Colonel in 1936 and was in command of the Lincoln and Welland Regiment 1936-1940. He also commanded the Welland Canal Force during the last four months of 1939 until its dissolution. He was appointed Commissioner of Refugee Camps and seconded to the Department of Secretary of State in Ottawa 1941-1943. Later, he was Director of Labour Projects for PW Camps 1943-1944.

<sup>120</sup>P.C. 5246, 15 July 1941..

pursuing studies therein. However, if the individuals concerned acted in a manner "undesirable in the public interest", or failed to comply with the conditions of their release, they could be reinterned.<sup>121</sup> In December 1942, there were only 341 refugees still interned, with 113 scheduled to be returned to the United Kingdom, leaving 228 refugees at Ile aux Noix, which was the only remaining refugee camp. Most, if not all of these internees were eventually released in Canada as their suitability for residence in Canada was decided upon. Thus by Christmas 1942, the interned refugee problem was solved and had ceased to be a thorn in the side of the Internment officials.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> P.C. 10210, 10 November 1942.

<sup>122</sup> Lt. Col. R.S.W. Fordham to Norman Robertson, 11 December 1942.

See also Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J4, Vols. 258 and 259.

About 692 refugees were released in Canada to attend school or work on farms. The others were returned to the United Kingdom for release, enlistment in the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (A.M.P.C.), revision of their cases, or continued internment.

## Chapter 5 - The Care and Treatment of Combatant Prisoners of War.

The first four flights of prisoners and internees from England in June-July 1940 contained far fewer combatant prisoners of war than the authorities had been led to expect. The 164 officer prisoners, along with 325 other ranks, were confined in the Calydor Sanatorium at Gravenhurst. The remaining 1,469 "other rank" prisoners were placed behind the wire at Espanola.

These men, and the many who followed them, provided a constant stream of problems for the Director of Internment Operations. Proud and arrogant, they epitomized the might of the German armed forces that had subjugated Europe and were ready to deliver the knockout blow to the United Kingdom. When they were transported to Canada, they believed that the invasion of England was only weeks away, and the prevalent feeling was that they would be home by Christmas.

The German military prisoners were subject to treatment under the International Convention Relative To The Treatment of Prisoners of War (Geneva Convention), as set forth in P.C. 4121 of 13 December 1939. They were in military custody and subject to the law relating to the Naval Service, the Militia or the Air Force in Canada.<sup>123</sup> Charges could be

<sup>123</sup>Article 45 of the Geneva Convention. However Article 49 ensured that a prisoner holding rank or equivalent status could not be deprived of it or its privileges by Canadian Tribunal or Officials.

sworn out against a prisoner, and the Commandant or Officer Commanding could summarily deal with the matter by a detention of not more than 28 days, or confinement to quarters not exceeding 14 days. The use of "dark cells" to confine prisoners was prohibited.<sup>124</sup> However, when the District Officer Commanding felt that a charge was serious enough, he could bring the accused to trial before a military court; or in the case of a civil offence, before a civil court of criminal jurisdiction. In this case, the Director of Internment Operations and the Representative of the Protecting Power were both to be notified.<sup>125</sup> The prisoner was to be afforded proper opportunity to prepare his defence, including the use of a lawyer. A representative of the Protecting Power was to be allowed to attend the trial, save for parts which had to be kept secret in the interests of the security of the State.<sup>126</sup> Punishment was not to be

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<sup>124</sup>Article 46 of the Geneva Convention. An officer prisoner undergoing summary punishment was not to be deprived of the privileges attached to his rank (Article 49), nor was he to be placed in the same building as NCO's or private soldiers undergoing detention (Article 49). Articles 54 to 59 of the Geneva Convention refer to disciplinary punishment of prisoners of war. Detention shall mean confinement in a cell, lighted by daylight with facilities for remaining out of doors or taking exercise for at least 2 hours per day. Prisoners in detention shall be allowed to read and write, and to send and receive letters; but they shall not receive parcels.

<sup>125</sup>Article 60 of the Geneva Convention.

<sup>126</sup>Article 62 of the Geneva Convention.

awarded in excess of that prescribed by the Army Act for acts of a similar nature when committed by persons subject to military law as soldiers.<sup>127</sup> Particulars of all sentences pronounced against prisoners of war by a military court were to be communicated immediately to the Protecting Power through the proper channels,<sup>128</sup> and the prisoner had the right to appeal his sentence through the usual channels.<sup>129</sup> The military courts were to adhere strictly to the "Rules of Procedure for Military Courts assembled for trial of Prisoners of War", with all expressions in the rules having the same meaning as in the Army Act.

The Geneva Convention also ensured that the combatant prisoners be housed in buildings or huts having dormitories, a prescribed amount of cubic air space for each individual, and fittings and bedding material of the same minimum requirements as for the depot troops of the Detaining Power. Other regulations ensured that the food be equivalent in quality and quantity to that of the depot troops, and that an infirmary be provided in every camp.

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<sup>127</sup>Article 46 of the Geneva Convention.

<sup>128</sup>Article 66 of the Geneva Convention.

<sup>129</sup>Article 64 of the Geneva Convention.

It is interesting to note the extent to which P.C. 4121 covers the areas of military courts, summary punishment, and trial by military court. Of the 112 pages of the original Order-in-Council, 102 pages examine every aspect of these proceedings.

The question of employment of prisoners of war has received some treatment, but merits more analysis. During their internment in the United Kingdom, the German prisoners and internees had questioned the Protecting Power whether they had to work for the Detaining Power. Article 3 of the Geneva Convention authorized belligerents to employ prisoners of war as workmen, under certain circumstances. The main fear of the British authorities in forcing the German prisoners to work was that the Germans would do the same to the larger number of British prisoners in their hands. However the Canadian authorities were desirous of working the German prisoners on roadwork and other public projects, with working conditions to be in accordance with the terms of the Geneva Convention. Prisoners were not to be paid for work in connection with the administration; internal arrangements and maintenance of the camp.<sup>130</sup> An exception could be made on the recommendation of the Camp Commandant, to be duly approved by the Director of Internment Operations, in the case of prisoners employed as cooks and other useful capacities, as their employment prevented them from earning money through other labour. No prisoner was to be employed on work for which he was physically unsuited.<sup>131</sup> No prisoner was to be employed on work having direct connection with the

<sup>130</sup>Article 34 of the Geneva Convention.

<sup>131</sup>Article 29 of the Geneva Convention.

war effort, nor on dangerous and unhealthy work.<sup>132</sup> One day of rest per week was to be provided.<sup>133</sup> Pay for work on various projects was to be 20 cents per day. Non-commissioned officers were compelled to undertake only supervisory work, for which they did not have to be paid. However if they expressly requested remunerative work, they were to be permitted to work under the same conditions as the other prisoners.<sup>134</sup> Duration of daily work was to not exceed that for civilian workers employed on the same jobs (usually eight hours), but included the time of the journey to and from work.<sup>135</sup>

The difference between paid and unpaid work was a contentious issue among all concerned. If persons were employed on work for other public administrators or for private individuals, the rate of pay was to be settled by agreement with the military authorities, and would have to be in keeping with the nature of the work performed.

<sup>132</sup>Articles 31 and 32 of the Geneva Convention.

<sup>133</sup>Article 30 of the Geneva Convention.

Sunday was the usual day of rest in the prison camps. However, when special days on the German calendar fell due (e.g. Hitler's birthday) and the Germans requested a holiday, this was taken instead and the prisoners worked on the following Sunday.

<sup>134</sup>Article 34 of the Geneva Convention.

<sup>135</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Directorate of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 1, File 1-2-3, Assistant Director of Internment Operations to Angus MacDonald, 7 August 1940.



Prisoners so employed had to be admitted to the benefit of provisions applicable to workmen of the same category in the event of accident or injury. The Government felt that individuals working for the Government of Canada who were injured would be entitled to no compensation other than the provisions of board, lodging, clothes and medical attendance to injuries at no cost. It was felt that these benefits would place them on at least as favourable a level, relative to their earning power while employed, as civilian nationals. The practice in Canada, though, was to pay the individual a portion of the pay he would have received had he been working. This varied according to the degree to which the injured man, in the opinion of the court of inquiry, had been responsible for the accident. If he was chiefly responsible, no cash payment was made; the maximum proportion was 75% of normal pay. However, this cash payment was a purely voluntary measure on the part of the Canadian Government.<sup>136</sup>

The Canadian authorities felt that it was important to keep the prisoners occupied. In addressing a letter to the District Officers Commanding, General Panet noted:

Everyone...realizes the importance of finding work for the prisoners. It is essential to employ all of them, if possible all the time. They will be happier if they are occupied. It will improve their morale and as a result

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<sup>136</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-1-6, Secretary of State for External Affairs to Argentine Minister in Canada, 12 November 1942.

it will be easier to handle the camp...<sup>137</sup>

What was left unmentioned, though it was paramount in the minds of all concerned, was that prisoners who were kept busy did not have time to plot modes of escape. Thus, it was important that the prisoners be worked, and aside from these practical means, it was important because the populace would be angry at the knowledge that these men were being taken care of by the taxpayers' money, without doing any work.

The prisoners were quick to complain to the ~~Protecting~~ Power if they felt that they were not getting paid for work that should receive remuneration. One of the letters from the Swiss Consul General to External Affairs raised this point:

During the last tour...one of the questions frequently brought to our attention and which is still a cause of burning controversy refers to discrimination between paid and unpaid work. In Camp E for instance, the spokesman complained that the prisoners of war were employed on fatigue duties in the guard quarters and for the benefit of the guards and their officers, such as cleaning rooms, washing dishes and other menial activities that in their opinion ought to be entrusted to voluntary and paid detachments. At Camp Q internees have repaired a road, done a certain amount of canalization work outside their compound and built up a recreation

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-2-3, General Panet to D.O.C.'s M.D. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 6 August 1940.

barrack without receiving any remuneration. In addition, they clean the official automobiles and the guards quarters, to which they particularly object, all without pay. At Petawawa camp, internees are employed at chopping wood in the compound and such work is not paid....<sup>138</sup>

Some of the complaints were valid, and others were not.

Colonel Hubert Stethem took pains to point these out to the authorities:

...it is not considered advisable... to call on the prisoners to do menial work in those quarters occupied solely by the guard unless such work is voluntary and remunerative....In regard to the complaint from Camp Q....the prisoners must be made to understand that their compulsory maintenance work is not confined to the inside of the compound itself....Our instructions in regard to new construction work indicates clearly that pay will be issued for such work. Regarding...the chopping of wood at Petawawa internment camp, the supply of fuel is essential to the maintenance of the camp and although it would appear to be in order to call on the prisoners to fell the trees necessary for the supply of fuelwood required to maintain heating and cooking facilities in the internment camp, new instructions are being issued to all internment camps under which it will be made quite clear that PW or internees are not to be expected to perform menial tasks for the members of the staff or guards unless on a compulsory or paid basis.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-2-3, Swiss Consul General to Department of External Affairs, 11 June 1941.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., Colonel Hubert Stethem to Department of External Affairs, 8 July 1941.

The work offered at each camp depended on the availability of labour opportunities in the area. Calydon and Espanola offered road and park construction. The position of Angler and Neys on the Trans-Canada Highway demanded that the men would work on road construction. Farming predominated at Monteith. The later camps at Medicine Hat and Lethbridge both had large acreages of land upon which the prisoners toiled, and the produce from these farms went towards feeding them.

One of the earliest conflicts that arose between the authorities and the German prisoners was over the question of clothing for the prisoners. Each internee received the following clothing from the Government at no cost to himself: leather boots, gum boots, three pairs of socks, two pairs of winter underwear, one winter cap, one summer cap, one mackinaw overcoat, woolen mitts, winter coat and trousers, as well as various necessities such as razors, shaving brushes etc.<sup>140</sup> Prisoners of War class 1 were permitted to wear their badges of rank and decorations. However, once their uniforms were worn out, they were issued with the standard type of internment clothing, which was lined or unlined blue denim, with special markings in order that they could be identified if an escape was effected. The back of

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<sup>140</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1, File 1-1-6, Colonel Hubert Stethem to Department of External Affairs, 19 March 1941.

the coat had a 14 inch red circle set into the cloth, and there was a red stripe down the right leg. The German prisoners were angered at such clothing, and viewed these identification markings as a stigma. The Director of Internment Operations found himself in complete disagreement with the prisoners:

....There can be no objection to the employment of a red circular patch or a red stripe as these markings are entirely peculiar to the prisoners of war or enemy alien internees. They are entirely distinctive from any marking used by inmates of penal institutions in Canada....The colour chosen - red - is held in the highest honour in the British service as is demonstrated by the fact that most Royal Regiments in the Service wear red tunics, and Senior Officers and General Officers are designated by a red band on their cap....The wearing of marked clothing is an absolute necessary measure of safety, called for by the actions of the officers themselves....<sup>141</sup>

It was also pointed out to the German officers that the practice of marked clothing had been originated in Germany in World War I, but that the Canadians were not enforcing it to the same degree.<sup>142</sup> Despite the protests of the

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., Vol. 2, File 1-2-7, Colonel Hubert Stethem to Department of External Affairs, 29 January 1941.

<sup>142</sup>During World War I, British officer prisoners of war who were not in possession of a uniform had a yellow stripe inserted in the trouser leg and a yellow band on each arm. Any civilian clothing arriving in the mail had the seam of one leg opened and a portion of cloth replaced by the yellow insert. The colour yellow connotated cowardice and was the colour used by the Germans to designate the Jewish people.

German officers to the Protecting Power, the Directorate was not about to change its policy, for unmarked civilian clothing would facilitate the escape of prisoners. The marked clothing thus continued as the standard internment type outfit for German prisoners.

Article 12 of the Geneva Convention permitted the establishment in each permanent internment camp of a canteen for the use of the prisoners. The Camp Commandant decided whether supplies were to be furnished from the guards' canteen, or whether they were to be ordered by a committee selected by the prisoners, under the supervision and control of an officer detailed by the commandant. The goods supplied to the canteen were to be sold to the prisoners at local market prices. At the outset of hostilities, it had been decreed that under no circumstances was beer, wine or spiritous liquor to be sold to the prisoners.<sup>143</sup> However this situation was altered after the arrival of the German combatant prisoners, who pointed out that in England the Officer P.W. had been permitted the purchase of beer and alcoholic beverages. The authorities relented, and the officers' mess was permitted to have beer at the discretion of the Camp Commandant. However, it was pointed out that this was a privilege, and could be withdrawn if abused.<sup>144</sup> Canteen

<sup>143</sup> Directorate of Internment Operations Files, op. cit., Vol. 5, File 3-2-4 (1), General Panet to D.O.C.'s M.D. 3, 5, 13, 4 October 1939.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., General Panet to Headquarters M.D. 2, 9 September 1940.

tickets were the legal tender for purchase in the camps. The prisoner would have a certain amount of money deducted from his credit, and turned into canteen tickets or token money. With these tickets, he would furnish payment for any goods purchased from the canteen. The canteen profits were accumulated to defray the cost of recreational, educational and other facilities for the benefit of all.<sup>145</sup>

Another problem that arose with the arrival of the German officers was their attitude towards their quarters. The first instance occurred with the sequestering of the German officer prisoners at Fort Henry. Gravenhurst had been the original camp for officer prisoners, and was selected because of the better quality surroundings that it offered. The Germans took advantage of the local terrain to effect several escape attempts, and the authorities realized that a more secure encampment was needed to hold them. Fort Henry was the ideal site and the officers were soon transferred there. Fort Henry had served as a receiving station in the early months of the war, after which it was occupied by Canadian troops until July 1940. From this period until October 1940, it was occupied by 600 internees, mostly officers and men of the German merchant

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<sup>145</sup>With damage to the barracks being a common happening, the authorities decided to take action and deduct an average of \$2 per capita to be withdrawn from the canteen surplus and set aside to pay for any damages caused by the German prisoners.

marine. Upon their departure, certain rooms previously occupied by the Administration officers were added to the quarters, and the sum total allowed for the occupancy of 164 officers and 140 other ranks. Thousands of dollars were spent making the quarters more comfortable - new floors were laid in all the upper rooms allotted for officers' accommodations where floor conditions were questionable. The walls were covered with insulating board at considerable expense. The existing barrack square was recovered with a suitable fine gravel, and its 54,000 square foot area was partly occupied by an ice hockey rink and mess house, and the officers were allowed access to a football field outside the walls. A complete water system was installed and placed below frost level. Officers were housed in large rooms on the upper story facing onto the barrack square, ten officers to a room. Other ranks were housed in the rooms level to the barrack square, sixteen men to a room at the most.

However, the Germans became truculent on their arrival in the camp, and complained that it was not suitable to German officer prisoners. Their complaints were amplified when a German naval surgeon who had been repatriated to Germany several months earlier, informed the German authorities that his comrades were being imprisoned in "casemates."<sup>146</sup> This touched off a program of retaliation

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<sup>146</sup>Casemates are tunnel-like openings under the battlements. The casemates at Fort Henry were large vaulted rooms in a



by the Germans, and it was learned that in March 1941 the Prisoner of War Division of the German High Command ordered the transfer of 500 British officer prisoners of war to "reprisal camps" Stalags XX A and XXI D where they would be confined under strict discipline with limited space at their disposal, and would be housed in casemates. It was only through the good offices of the Swiss Consul General that the German authorities were made aware of this misrepresentation, and they responded by closing the "reprisal camps" in June 1941. However, they were still under misconceptions about conditions in the camp:

...they now maintain that they have no complaint of a material nature, but they feel that "the Canadians have no military tradition behind them and this lack of military tradition had led to the treatment of the German officer prisoners which they cannot countenance." They are of the opinion that the officers at Camp F are not treated with respect that is due to officer prisoners of war. They are under the misapprehension that the guards are ex-wardens of penitentiaries and carry truncheons instead of rifles and bayonets....<sup>147</sup>

separate building within the walls. The Germans also erred in misinterpreting certain phrases in a report received from the inspection officer of the I.C.R.C., although this officer and his superior had stated that conditions were more than satisfactory. The fort was described as being over 100 years old, though no mention was made of the renovations. The rooms were described as casemates which the Germans assumed to be underground. The courtyard was described as being small, though it had over 50,000 square feet.

<sup>147</sup> Director of Internment Operations Files, op. cit., Vol. 25, File 9-1-5, Colonel Hubert Stethem to A.R. Kaufman, 17 June 1941.

In September 1941, a reciprocal agreement was reached with the German Government not to use fortresses and penal establishments as prisoner of war camps. To fulfil their obligation under this agreement, the Directorate transferred the officer P.W. to the new camp at Bowmanville in November 1941.

Unfortunately, this problem with the German officer prisoners was not an isolated one, and there was dissatisfaction again with their quarters. This time, it occurred at the officers' camp at Neys (Camp W). It was specially built for internment operations and had a capacity of 600 men. It was opened on 25 January 1941, and was located on the main line of the C.P.R. facing Lake Superior, about 2.5 miles from the flag station at Neys. The camp consisted of four huts, each capable of holding 150 men, and covered an area of 810' x 624'. Upon their arrival at the camp, the German officers complained that it was a camp not suitable for officers, but rather for civilians. They complained about the large number of other ranks in the camp, and that all had the same accommodations, thereby forcing the officers to mingle with their men. To show their dissatisfaction with conditions in the camp, the German officers went on a hunger strike which lasted for a 100 hour period. It was finally called off through the efforts of the Swiss Consul General, and because a representative of the Department of

National Defence visited the compound and promised the officers that conditions would improve. The authorities then erected partitions inside the huts to subdivide the officers into groups of senior, middle and junior rank officers. As the Delegate of the International Red Cross in Canada, Mr. Ernest Maag, commented at this time<sup>148</sup> "...the Dominion Government has in my opinion made a real effort to not only live up to the letter of the Geneva Convention, but also to the spirit of it." However, this did not placate the officer prisoners who then proceeded to go on a letter strike to emphasize their grievances. They were unhappy because the partitions in the huts did not extend all the way to the ceiling, the furnishings were not in keeping with a German officer's dignity, and there was refusal on the part of the officers to wear the "marked" uniforms provided by the Canadian Government. Other complaints were because officers of different ranks had to sleep in the same rooms, and each section still held 40-45 men (where it had been 60 before). The attitude of the German prisoners angered Colonel Stethem, who scathingly criticized them in a letter to the Department of External Affairs:

They (the officers) are consistently endeavouring to provoke the authorities as much as possible, and show little or

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., Vol. 26, File 9-5-3-100, Visit of Ernest Maag, 1 March 1941.

no cooperation. They objected to their transfer to Canada; they objected to the location of the camp, as they considered it should be situated close to one of the large centres, and they made various protests to the Protecting Power....The attitude of these officers is so provocative that it is impossible to ascertain any concrete or satisfactory reason for their actions in regard to letter writing, but it may definitely be stated<sup>149</sup> that there is no justifiable excuse.

Once the accommodations had been suitably altered, the Germans stopped their letter writing strike, and instead conducted an "unofficial" strike in order to cause problems for the authorities. This consisted of writing "Do not worry. I am fine." on all letters being sent back to Germany.<sup>150</sup> To solve their problems at Neys, the Directorate decided to transfer most of the other rank prisoners to Espanola, and leave only enough at Neys to act as orderlies for the officers.

Upon their arrival in the camps, the prisoners lost all their monies and effects to the authorities. The effects were duly inventoried and put in safekeeping, to be returned on release or parole. The monies were to be credited

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<sup>149</sup>Ibid., Colonel Hubert Stethem to Department of External Affairs, 30 May 1941.

<sup>150</sup>German authorities were censoring the letters that were being sent back to Germany. With several hundred letters from the same camp passing through the censors, all bearing the same notation, the German Foreign Office would immediately become suspicious and assume that the prisoners were attempting to advise them of maltreatment. This was the aim of the prisoners, when in actuality, no such maltreatment was taking place.

to the PW's account and dealt with in accordance with instructions issued under the authority of the Director of Internment Operations relating to financial accounting.<sup>151</sup>

Article 86 of the Geneva Convention allowed for the representatives of the Protecting Power to visit prisoners and all parts of the camp occupied and used by prisoners.<sup>152</sup> They would intervene on the part of prisoners and act on any complaints set forth by them. They would fill out reports after each visit to the camps, and note what they saw and what complaints were set forth. These reports were sent back to Switzerland and ultimately reached Germany. A somewhat similar role was played by Mr. Ernest Maag, the delegate to Canada of the International Red Cross

Committee. He was allowed access to the camps, and brought<sup>151</sup> When an internment camp was opened, two separate bank accounts were established with PW funds held in trust. THE RECEIVER GENERAL (TRUST ACCOUNT INTERNMENT CAMP OPERATIONS) account held deposits of "funds received at camp." Pay credited to the prisoners at each camp was totaled up and one cheque covering the whole sum was sent to the camp by the Receiver General. Receiver General Drafts were then made up from it in the names of the individuals at each camp. The cheques were then distributed to the accounts of the men, and were signed for off the Acquittance Rolls. These came out of the Internment Camp Trust Account in which deposits were made of all advances received from the Director of Internment Operations for the purpose of providing funds to meet payments to or on behalf of PW. All cheques issued to or on behalf of PW were to be made out and charged to this account.

<sup>152</sup> The Swiss Consul Generals in Canada representing German interests were Mr. Gaston Jaccard (with offices in the Sun Life Building in Montreal) and Mr. John Oertly (operating out of Toronto).

comforts and supplies to the prisoners.<sup>153</sup> However, he did not have the same duties as the representative of the Protecting Power, and was there only in regard to the prisoners' mental and physical well being.

Each combatant officer prisoner of war and merchant seaman was permitted to write four postcards and three letters per month, whereas other ranks were permitted four postcards and two letters per month. Protected personnel were permitted double the above quota.<sup>154</sup> Civilian internees were allowed four cards and four letters per month. No postal charges were made in the country of origin or destination for parcels and correspondence addressed to prisoners of war, although regular airmail rates had to be paid by the

<sup>153</sup> A variety of groups and individuals were interested in contributing to help ease the lot of the prisoners in Canadian camps. Frontier College, through the work of Principal E.W. Bradwin, sent shipments of books and magazines for the prisoners. The War Prisoners Aid of the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., through Mr. Conrad Hoffman Jr., their Secretary in Canada, sent along books, pianos, music instruments, athletic equipment, school supplies, spices for the cooks, and toilet sets (5 razor blades, 1 tube of toothpaste, 1 bar toilet soap, 1 piece shaving soap, 1 shaving soap mug, 1 tooth brush) for the men. The Swiss Consul General and the German Society in Montreal provided recreational equipment. Private individuals were encouraged to contribute German books, provided that they were non-political and not of a nature to incite the internees. They had to be new books and shipped from a bookseller, so that no messages could be marked on the pages. The International Red Cross supplied pianos, games, books and other articles. Tobacco and cigarettes could be sent from the United States provided the U.S. excise seals on the original packages had not been tampered with. No liquor, cigarette paper or drugs were to be forwarded.

<sup>154</sup> Protected personnel refers to medical personnel, padres and those members of the armed forces who do not bear arms.

prisoners if they made use of airmail. Prisoners were also permitted to send telegrams and overseas cables at their expense. All letter mail to and from prisoners of war was censored in the Post Office at Ottawa by censors employed by the Post Office. These civilians each looked after the mail of 100 PW and kept a card index of this correspondence. They were to watch for details of intelligence value and pass this information along to the three military intelligence officers at the Post Office. The interpreters at the camps were to censor at least 10% of all mail to and from Germany, and 100% of all mail to and from contacts in the United States and South America. Prisoners were allowed to receive postal parcels containing foodstuffs and other articles intended for consumption or clothing, as well as consignments of books.

The conditions in the prisoner camps left little to be desired. As Ernest Maag noted in his report on Internment Operations in Canada: "With regard to hygiene and salubrity, the camps in Canada met...the most modern requirements....."<sup>155</sup> The housing was the same as that of the Canadian armed forces. Hot and cold water was available, and there were proper sanitary installations, including flush toilets and hot and cold running showers. The

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<sup>155</sup> Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File 382.013 (D13), Report of the Red Cross Delegate on Internment Operations in Canada, 26 April 1946, p. 3.

prisoners received identical rations equivalent in quality and quantity to those issued to members of the Canadian Active Service Force.<sup>156</sup> All camps were provided with completely equipped tailor and shoe repair shops, as well as barber shops, all of which were staffed by the prisoners and proved quite successful. In addition to the goods on sale from the canteen at regular local market prices, the prisoners were able to order articles selected from mail order houses.<sup>157</sup> All camps were equipped with an infirmary and a dental clinic. Doctors and medical orderlies (protected personnel) of the nationality of the prisoners were retained and engaged in their professions in the camps. Extensive use was made of the military and civil hospitals and institutions, at the expense of the Detaining Power. Competent opticians and oculists visited the camps and provided lenses at no cost to the prisoners. Members of the Canadian Dental Corps and the Canadian Medical Corps provided treatment at

<sup>156</sup>Only in July 1945 were the rations reduced considerably because of the shortages in rations for civilians, and the necessity of supplying food for the starving peoples of Europe. The prisoners gained weight during their internment up to 1945, and it was conceded that the fare to this time was "sumptuous."

<sup>157</sup>The main beneficiary from these sales was the T. Eaton Company. No systematic saving of funds was in evidence, and there was a tendency to spend every cent in commodities, especially of lasting value. The Germans felt that if Britain lost the war, Canadian money would be worthless in Germany, and if Germany lost the war, German money would be worthless. They felt it to be wiser to have the goods rather than the legal tender.



the camps. Mr. Maag felt that the medical treatment provided at the camps merited the following praise: "...it must be stated that the general health was so good and the death rate among prisoners was so small that the record regarding Article 15 of the Geneva Convention must be described as excellent."<sup>158</sup> Article 43 of the Geneva Convention was upheld in that a camp spokesman was appointed to represent the prisoners before the military authorities, the Protecting Power and charitable organizations. The camp spokesman had to be approved by the Military Authorities, and in officers' camps, it was usually the prisoner with the highest rank who held this post. However, he had a staff of other officers to assist him with his duties. Advantage was taken of this privilege to appoint assistants and functionaries within the camp.<sup>159</sup> Camp spokesmen were not used on work parties, and were exempt from ordinary camp chores. In all camps they had the special privilege of occupying private quarters adjacent to their offices. Mixed medical commissions consisting of three members (two Swiss, one of whom was the Chairman, and one Canadian) went around

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<sup>158</sup> Directorate of History, op. cit., Report of the Red Cross Delegate on Internment Operations in Canada, p. 4.

<sup>159</sup> Mr. Maag noted that at Camp 133 where some 10,000 prisoners were housed in November 1944, there were no fewer than 2,000 functionaries operating under the direct control of the Camp Spokesman. More will be stated in the Chapter on "Counter-Intelligence" concerning the pro and anti-Nazi factions that arose in these camps.

to the various camps examining the sick and wounded prisoners, and made the appropriate decisions in regard to them. A large number of sick and wounded German prisoners were actually repatriated.<sup>160</sup>

These were the conditions that prevailed in the P.W. camps in Canada, and as can be seen, treatment was very good indeed. The authorities went out of their way to keep within both the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Convention. Their care and interest was not, however, acknowledged by the behaviour of the German prisoners.

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<sup>160</sup>Repatriates included 55 officers, 344 other ranks, 266 protected personnel, 304 merchant seamen, 196 civilian internees for a total of 1,165 men.

Chapter 6 - Augmentation of German Prisoners and Anglo-American Agreements.

After the arrival of the first four shiploads of prisoners and internees, there was a lull before the arrival of more prisoners from the United Kingdom due to a Government desire to downplay Canada's role in accepting prisoners from the United Kingdom:


....In Dr. Skelton's opinion and in mine, it would be desirable to allow the United Kingdom to take the initiative in suggesting the transfer of further PW and/or internees to the Dominion. We do not wish to give the impression that we are pressing for an enlargement of this movement.<sup>161</sup>

As of 8 October 1940, there were 170 German officer PW and 1,800 German other ranks interned in Canada. The next proposed influx of German combatant prisoners was the sending of 1,000 captured airmen to Newfoundland. Work was started on an internment camp near the shores of Conception Bay and the prisoners were expected to arrive in November. The Permanent Joint Board on Defence viewed these actions with misgivings:

- The Board felt strongly that the incarceration of German prisoners in Newfoundland would present a serious military hazard which might jeopardize the defence of Newfoundland. The possibility of a German raider reaching this area and freeing the prisoners

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<sup>161</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Directorate of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 10, File 4-2-1 (2), Hugh Keenleyside to General Panet, 8 July 1940.



was one of the more important factors in influencing the views of the Board. The Board has earnestly recommended to the Canadian Government that discussions be initiated with the United Kingdom and Newfoundland with a view to bringing about an alteration in the plan of diverting these German prisoners to some less dangerous destination....<sup>162</sup>

The British then proposed that Canada accept the 1,000 airmen and send to Newfoundland some 1,000 enemy merchant seamen.<sup>163</sup> This proposal was open to the same objection as the previous one, and the whole matter was referred to the Minister of National Defence for discussion with the P.J.B.D. The Board studied the problem and felt that the establishment of an internment camp in Newfoundland would create an unnecessary and dangerous hazard. However, it was felt that as a contribution to the solution of the problem, the Canadian Government should offer to accept the airmen, in addition to the persons already sent to this country for internment. This course of action was followed<sup>164</sup> and was accepted by the British authorities.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>162</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Vol. 2, Secretary of State for External Affairs to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, #177, 9 October 1940.

Some £40,000 had already been spent on the construction of the camp at Carbonear.

<sup>163</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vol. 296, p. 251433, Lord Cranborne to Mackenzie King, #152, 2 November 1940.

<sup>164</sup>Ibid., W.L.M. King to Lord Cranborne, #207, 20 November 1940.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., Lord Cranborne to W.L.M. King, #166, 27 November 1940.

As their part of the agreement, the Canadian Government undertook to take over the custody of 1,000 German airmen prisoners of war, in addition to those already interned in Canada. These men arrived in Canada in January 1941 and were housed at the camps at Neys (officers with other ranks for orderlies) and Angler (other ranks camp).<sup>166</sup>

At about this time, several questions that were important and crucial to the handling of the prisoners of war problem arose, and demanded some sort of response from the authorities. The first of these was the status of Enemy Merchant Seamen (EMS). In the early days of the war, captured German seamen had been classified as P.W. Class 2 (civilian internees). However, it was realized that this term was insufficient to cover these men, and their status was questionable under P.C. 4121. A new definition of Enemy Merchant Seaman was established in order to classify them under the Category of P.W. Class 1 and give them the privileges extended to combatant prisoners under the Geneva Convention:

An Enemy Merchant Seaman is an enemy national who at the time of his capture is the member of a crew of any ship or is proceeding abroad in accordance with an agreement to join and serve in any

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<sup>166</sup>Some 243 officers and 748 other ranks sailed on 8 January 1941 from England. They arrived on the SS NERISSA at Halifax on 15 January and on the EMPIRE ENDURANCE at St. John on 16 January. They were then entrained to the camps at Angler and Neys.

ship, or who has been at any time  
since 1 September 1939, a member of  
the crew of any ship.<sup>167</sup>

From 1 July 1942, Enemy Merchant Seamen were to be treated as P.W. Class 1, and were to be subject to the Geneva Convention with the exception of those articles dealing with work and pay. They could be employed on maintenance work within the camp area, but could only do voluntary work outside that area. They would not receive pay other than working pay from the Detaining Power. Clothing was to be the same as that for other prisoners of war, and food was to be in accordance with the Convention. Officers were to be permitted three letters and four postcards per month; while seamen could mail two letters and four postcards per month. They were also permitted to be examined by the Mixed Medical Commission.

The next question was of primary import in that it accentuated the Anglo-Canadian agreement with all its attendant questions in regard to the holding and handling of German prisoners of war. The Canadians disagreed with the British authorities as to the status of German prisoners who were held in Canada on behalf of the British Government.

<sup>167</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Directorate of Internment Operations, RG 6, I, Vol. 1, File 1-2-4 (3), Colonel H.N. Streight to Commandants Camps 22, 31, 33, 40, 43, 70, 100, 130, 27 June 1942.

No clause in the Geneva Convention or any other international convention required that merchant seamen were to be treated as prisoners of war.

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In a conference in London on 15 January 1941, Mr. C.H.S. Ritchie, representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom, set forth the Canadian view that they preferred to be regarded as an agent for H.M. Government in the United Kingdom in respect to transferred prisoners rather than as principal holder of the prisoners. Sir George Warner K.C.V.O. (representative of the Foreign Office) stated that the "Agency principle" carried with it the corollary that the regulations in force in the Dominions should be identical with those in force in the United Kingdom and that wherever the term "Detaining Power" occurred in the Geneva Convention in connection with a standard of accommodation or treatment, these terms should refer to the United Kingdom. The Canadian representative stated that it was unlikely that the Canadian Government would abrogate its right to make such security regulations as it thought necessary on a basis of full sovereignty. They had been accepted and transfers made on the understanding that nothing should conflict with or adversely affect the security of the Dominion. The "Agency principle" did not necessarily imply that the Dominions must accept whatever interpretation H.M. Government in the United Kingdom placed upon the Convention, and differences in interpretation could be regulated by discussion.

Thus, the holding of German prisoners of war was

based on the fact that prisoners transferred out of the custody of H.M. Government in the United Kingdom into that of Canada (and consequently into that of any other Dominion) would have H.M. Government in the United Kingdom as principals and the receiving governments as agents. An Intergovernmental P.W. Committee was established in London upon which the United Kingdom Departments of Government concerned would be represented and to which representatives of all Dominions who received prisoners were to be invited.<sup>168</sup>

The first meeting of Subcommittee A of the Imperial P.W. Committee took place on 26 June 1941, and established the composition and terms of reference for the Committee. The Committee was established:

...to consider such questions affecting policy and general administration of prisoners of war as concern more than one Government within the Empire, with a view to avoiding undesirable differences of treatment....<sup>169</sup>

The British felt that the War Office should accept general responsibility for coordinating all matters relating to prisoners of war. The liaison principle was to be developed

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<sup>168</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, I, Vol. 1, File 1-2-8 (1), Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #905, 19 May 1941.

The representative of the Canadian High Commissioner in the United Kingdom was Mr. George Ignatieff.

<sup>169</sup>Ibid. Minutes of First Meeting of Intergovernmental Committee of Prisoners of War-Subcommittee A, 26 June 1941.



for the purpose of easing the disposal of minor difficulties arising out of differences in the interpretation of the Convention by the different signatory governments as might arise from time to time. It was felt that the coordination of treatment of prisoners of war would avoid as far as possible any occasion for the enemy adopting discriminatory action with regard to British or Dominion prisoners in enemy custody. This principle met with general approval from the Canadian authorities, but it was assumed that this "policy" referred only to the treatment of prisoners and not to general questions involving responsibility for the Convention, and relations with the Protecting Power and the International Red Cross Committee. The Secretary of State for External Affairs pointed out that:



...the position taken by the Canadian representative should be maintained. As regards prisoners who may be captured by the Canadian forces operating in conjunction with the British forces in the European theatre of war, the Canadian Government will be prepared to regard them as prisoners taken by the United Kingdom and to apply the agency principle. On the other hand as regards prisoners captured by the Canadian forces acting independently and especially in the Western Hemisphere, the Canadian Government regards itself as the Detaining Power....The Canadian Government is not, repeat not, prepared to agree that all communications to the enemy governments concerning Canadians in enemy hands or enemy prisoners for whom Canada is the detaining power, should be transmitted through the Foreign Office. The practice of direct

communication with the Protecting Power for Canadian interests, the International Red Cross at Geneva, and the representatives of the Protecting Power for enemy interests, is already well established and working satisfactorily and it would not be desired to change it without good reason. The Canadian Government has secured the recognition by the Protecting Powers, the International Red Cross Committee and the enemy, of Canadian nationality as distinct from British subjects generally and it is desired to maintain this position....<sup>170</sup>

<sup>170</sup> Ibid. Mackenzie King to Vincent Massey, #1083, 19 July 1941.

The question involved here was the search for Canadian autonomy from British domination. The United Kingdom authorities felt the necessity of having the closest possible means of consultation between His Majesty's Governments on matters concerning prisoners of war and internees, with a view to reaching agreement and uniformity of policy throughout the Empire. Their feeling was that the channelization of communications through the Foreign Office would lead to a protection of the interests of Dominion prisoners. Their view was that the Germans looked of P.W. held by the British Commonwealth as an Empire responsibility and held the Empire as a whole responsible for any breach of the Convention. At the same time, they held Empire prisoners in camps together and without discrimination in treatment. The British argument can be summarized in 3 points: 1) If uniformity of treatment of British prisoners of war is to be preserved and divergencies and discriminations avoided, treatment of enemy P.W. must be uniform throughout the Empire. 2) The United Kingdom Government, which has acted as spokesman for the other Governments of the Empire to ensure proper treatment of all British prisoners of war will be greatly hampered unless it is in a position to offer the enemy Governments reciprocity throughout the Empire. 3) Reciprocity and the prevention of reprisals or divergency of treatment demand prompt administrative decision and uniform implementation throughout the Empire. On the other hand, the Canadian Government felt that their capture of enemy personnel should automatically designate them as the Detaining Power. The Government was prepared to act as agent, and not as principal, with regard to the Prisoners of War designated, but only in relation to the "treatment

The Canadian Government appreciated the need for securing uniformity of policy, but felt that this had been secured in the first place with the Government being in the habit of consulting the United Kingdom Government before making representations to the Protecting Power; and the same Protecting Power was employed for both Governments. In the final summary, the Canadian Government kept its autonomy regarding channels of communication between the Dominion Governments and the Protecting Power. The Canadian Government had firm lines of communication with both the Protecting Power and the International Red Cross Committee; and with their close relations to Washington, Ottawa was most reluctant to give up that channel.

While the Governments haggled over channels of communication and the "agency principle", there were also financial matters to be ironed out in regard to the payment of the prisoners. The Minister of Finance, Mr. J.L. Ilsley, outlined the agreement undertaken with the British Government:

....1) It is understood and agreed that the United Kingdom will repay to the Canadian Government the costs incurred by the Canadian Government on their behalf in the transport and maintenance of the prisoners of war and enemy aliens concerned. 2) In respect to pay of

of prisoners of war" and not in relation to "general questions involving the responsibility of the several governments under the Convention and relations with the Protecting Powers and the International Red Cross Committee.

officer prisoners of war...it is understood and agreed that the United Kingdom as the Detaining Power will be responsible for pay up to the day preceding disembarkation in Canada and that the Canadian Government will be responsible for such pay thereafter, but will raise a claim on this account against the United Kingdom Government.

3) It is understood and agreed that the Canadian Government will bear finally any working pay issued to prisoners of war and enemy aliens for work done in Canada. 4) It is understood and agreed that the Canadian Government will include in the charge of maintenance recoverable from the United Kingdom Government the cost of the administrative staffs of prisoners of war and internment camps specially set up for this purpose. The Canadian Government will however agree to bear costs of military personnel posted as guards at the camp....special camps had to be opened and maintained for the prisoners of war and internees from the United Kingdom and it was not possible to find the guards for these camps from existing units and we were compelled to enlist a comparatively large number of men especially for this purpose. Nevertheless the Canadian Government agrees to bear the cost for these guards. It should perhaps be added that the establishment of these camps has involved certain costs for construction and repair which would not otherwise have been required. Such items will be included in the cost of maintenance, but of course the United Kingdom Government would be entitled at the close of the war to any residual value resulting from the resultant construction work.<sup>171</sup>

Expenditures that were to be recoverable from the United

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., Vol. 35, File 12-1-9, J.L. Ilsley to O.D. Skelton, 26 October 1940.

Kingdom at the termination of hostilities were to be accounted for in such a manner as to separate them entirely from expenditures incurred for which the Canadian Government was responsible.<sup>172</sup> This original agreement had the approval of the parties concerned; but the British changed their mind in 1941 after the transfer of the 1,000 airmen to Canada in January of that year. As agreed to by the Canadian Government and passed into law through several Orders in Council, the Canadian Government was to be responsible for the service pay of German officers arriving in Canada, and pay was to be delegated from the date of embarkation from England.<sup>173</sup> This system was to be inaugurated with the transfer of the 1,000 airmen from Britain in January 1941. The Canadian Government was also to be responsible for arrears of pay in respect to promotions of rank when properly

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<sup>172</sup> A memo by Treasury Officer H.B. Rayner to General Panet dated 3 July 1940 estimated that for the following six months of operations, the costs of operating and maintaining the camps would be \$5 million; while administrative costs would be \$55,000. By Order in Council P.C. 125/3030 of 9 July 1940, the Treasury Board recommended that the sum of \$2,513,750 be allocated from the War Appropriation to provide for internment operations in connection with the opening and maintaining camps required to accommodate prisoners and internees from Britain. National Defence was to receive 2,500,000, and Secretary of State was to receive the remainder.

<sup>173</sup> These Orders in Council included P.C. 79/5204 dated 16 July 1941, P.C. 67/6016 dated 6 August 1941 and P.C. 120/7474 dated 23 September 1941 which amended P.C. 79/5204 and allocated \$10,519 for arrears in pay for the 1,000 German airmen, and also arrears in pay in respect to promotions in rank.

notified by the German Government.

Pay scales for the members of the German armed forces were another problem that needed to be attended to by the two countries. Article 23 of the Geneva Convention required belligerents to agree on a rate of exchange to govern pay issues to officers, failing which the rate in force at the commencement of hostilities was to be adopted. This led to a somewhat complicated system for paying the officer prisoners:

....The rate of exchange operates two ways, namely: a) it determines the amount of sterling to be paid to German officer prisoners of war and b) it determines the amount of sterling to be charged against the pay accounts of British prisoners. As the German rate of pay is less than the British, officer prisoners of war in both countries should receive, under the Convention, the German rate of pay. The view of the United Kingdom Government at the outset was that it would have been fair to take the prewar travel rate of approximately Rm 24.5 to £1 for these transactions. The Germans refused point blank to accept the travel mark rate and have hitherto insisted that, as no rate had been agreed, the appropriate rate to apply was the prewar free rate of Rm 10.77 to £1. It was regarded by the British Government as untenable since the free rate operated over a comparatively limited field. The British Government made a further attempt to agree with the German Government on the gold parity rate on the basis of Rm 20 to £1 but this was also refused. The latest proposal of the British Government to which no reply as yet has been received is to compromise between the German free rate

and the gold parity rate on the basis of Rm 15 to £1. This arrangement however has not yet received the assent of the German Government. Further complications have arisen as a result of the fact that the British Government has learned that the Germans have in fact reduced the British officers' pay to one half presumably because the British Government was issuing pay at approximately Rm 20 to £1 instead of Rm 10.... the British Government express the view that if the German prisoners transferred to Canada are to be regarded under the Convention as the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government, the rate should be applied in Canada and should be the dollar equivalent of the sterling rate which may ultimately be settled with the German Government. On the other hand it is admitted that if the prisoners are to be regarded as Canada's responsibility, then it would be for the Canadian Government to agree with the German Government at a rate of exchange applicable to such payments. In default of such an agreement...the Germans would undoubtedly claim to apply the free mark rate for the exchange of the Canadian dollars to Reichmarks operative on the day before Canada declared war....<sup>174</sup>

On the basis of this scheme, the exchange rate of 15 Reichmarks to £1 was established, and the Foreign Exchange Control Board

set the Canadian-British exchange rate at \$4.43 to £1.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>174</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 35, File 12-1-9, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, 22 October 1940.

<sup>175</sup>The pay scales were: Lieutenant - 72 Rm per month; Ober-leutnant - 81 Rm; Captain - 96 Rm; Major - 108 Rm; Colonel - 150 Rm; Generals - 240 Rm. For three months after the unconditional surrender of Germany, the German officers still received their monthly pay on the same basis as during the war. From September 1945, a new rate of exchange was set, approximately Rm 40 - £. This was approximately 26.66% of the amounts paid earlier.

The Canadian Government made arrangements with the British Government that credit balances left in Canada by prisoners and internees returned to Britain would offset the credit balances left in the United Kingdom.<sup>176</sup>

Aside from the pay given to officer prisoners of war, German other ranks received a monthly allowance from Germany at the rate of \$11 per month for N.C.O.'s and \$6.60 per month for private soldiers.<sup>177</sup> Enemy merchant seamen received a quarterly payment of \$13.26 from their shipping companies. Civilian internees received an allowance from the Swiss Consul General, subject to signing a form pledging allegiance to the Reich. German "other ranks" protected personnel received "protected personnel pay."

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<sup>176</sup>The credit balances of British internees sent to Canada were not transferred because the British Government would not permit the sterling to be taken out of the country. The individuals with credit balances were accommodated by the Canadian Government putting up the money where necessary. The amount advanced was \$5,000, and the Canadian Government was to later raise a claim against the British Government for that sum. With the offsetting credit balances for prisoners returned to Britain, the total statement for the fiscal year ending 31 March 1942 was \$2,653.10.

<sup>177</sup>The pay for the German other ranks ("Sonderzuwendung") was discontinued in September 1944. The last payment for the German merchant seamen was effected in the fourth quarter of 1944. The Swiss Consul General instituted an "Ease Camp Relief" action in the summer of 1945 under which scheme those prisoners who were out on work projects and had a steady income voluntarily deducted one day's pay per month in favour of their comrades in base camps, the pay of the working prisoners being 50¢ per day. These payments permitted only the purchase of necessities, and not all the prisoners contributed to this fund.



With the question of pay being discussed, the transfer of prisoners still continued. In September 1941, the Canadian authorities received a request from the British authorities for the transfer of 2,010 additional German prisoners. This raised problems regarding accommodation for the new prisoners, and steps were taken to secure property at Bowmanville. It was hoped that the conditions here would lead to a reciprocal improvement in conditions for British officers throughout Germany. Numbers of prisoners were shifted around in order to handle the new influx. The new camp at Bowmanville would accommodate the officers from Neys and Fort Henry, as well as the new officers being transferred from the United Kingdom.<sup>178</sup> The next request regarding prisoners came in December 1941 as the result of a successful British advance in North Africa. The British asked for aid in disposal of the German prisoners:

....The Commander-in-Chief Middle East has telegraphed the United Kingdom authorities that he now has, in addition to 20,000 Italian prisoners, 4,000 Germans whom he is anxious to evacuate  
 ....Disposal of Italian prisoners is being arranged to India and South Africa but neither country is in a position to

<sup>178</sup> Bowmanville was the site of the Ontario Industrial School, which had been opened in 1925. It was made available rent free by the Ontario Government, though some \$100,000 was required for the erection of administration buildings. A party of 337 Luftwaffe other ranks, 628 German naval ratings and 35 German Army other ranks sailed on 22 December from England and arrived in Canada on 1 January 1942 aboard the S.S. NORTON BAY.

accommodate German prisoners. It had been expected that the majority of Germans could be sent to Australia but reports from the Middle East now indicate that lack of shipping facilities now make the possibility questionable. In view of the routes of convoys, United Kingdom authorities feel that they have no alternative but to approach Canada to request them to take 4,000 German prisoners of war now held in the Middle East pending evacuation.....<sup>179</sup>

The Canadian Government acquiesced to this demand on the condition that they receive six weeks notice of their arrival, and they also studied the question of the acceptance of larger numbers of prisoners. However, this caused a problem in regard to accommodation:

....The acceptance of these 4,000 P.W. will exhaust the capacity of the existing system of camps and consideration will have to be given to the establishment of new larger camps designed to hold thousands instead of hundreds. Canadian authorities are considering plans for such units to take 10,000 P.W. each and if this appears feasible may be prepared to accept custody of the larger number of prisoners mentioned in your telegram 2487 of 27 December....<sup>180</sup>


By March 1942, five camps were housing 3,943 prisoners of war and another five housing 2,247 class 2 prisoners of war. Two other camps housing approximately 1,200 refugees brought

<sup>179</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, L, Vol. 10, File 4-2-1, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2487, 27 December 1941.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid., Mackenzie King to Vincent Massey, #37, 7 January 1942.

the total of prisoners being held on behalf of Great Britain to 7,390. With the anticipated arrival of 15,000 for the year 1942 from the Middle East, it was proposed to utilize five camps for P.W. Class 1, one camp for P.W. Class 2, and one camp for refugees. This would replace five camps in addition to the camp at Red Rock which was already vacant, for a total of six camps. Some of these vacated camps could be used for the internment of Japanese civilians, while others could be used to house troops; but at least two camps would be available for use as receiving stations and in case of an emergency. The Canadian authorities with the steady influx of prisoners, took a long look at the costs for the planned 10,000 unit camps. The engineers estimated the cost of each camp to be \$2,183,000, and on reception of these figures, the Government petitioned the British authorities for permission to erect the camp. Contracts were placed in the summer after the go-ahead was received.

A total of 989 prisoners arrived early in April and a further 900 prisoners in the middle of the month. One of the larger shipments of captured Germans from the Middle East arrived at New York, since the United States was now one of the belligerent nations, on 22 May aboard the QUEEN ELIZABETH, when 3,989 prisoners were disembarked. The prisoners were then entrained and brought to Seebe, Alberta where they were housed in a tented camp (Camp 133 at



Ozada).<sup>181</sup> At this moment, the Directorate was holding 12,854 prisoners on behalf of the British Government (822 officers, 8,152 other ranks, 3,046 internees and 834 refugees). Space for 2,000 additional internees could be found in the tented camp at Ozada, and with the completion of the 10,000 unit camp and enlargement of two other camps, accommodation was available for 15,654 prisoners. With the anticipated arrival of another 6,000 prisoners before the end of the year, it was necessary to commence construction on a second 10,000 unit camp. It was felt that on the completion of this second camp, six camps presently in use would be closed - three to be used by Canadian troops and three to be abandoned.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>The German prisoners complained bitterly to the Swiss Consul General that the accommodations were in direct contravention to the Geneva Convention. Their complaints became quite vociferous as the weather turned prematurely cold in Alberta, and the prisoners suffered. The Swiss Consul General sided with the Canadian authorities and pointed out that the Veterans Guard were also living in the tents, and thus no blame could be laid. It is interesting to note that while in the tented camp the prisoners did not suffer any ill health, but immediately upon their placement in the permanent camp with its natural gas heating, they came down with the flu.

<sup>182</sup>The camps at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were to accommodate 10,000 prisoners each, and the camps at Monteith and Fredericton were enlarged, so that these camps could accommodate 26,000 men amongst them. In the spring of 1942, some 6,000 German prisoners of war were transferred from the Middle East via South Africa. The ships sailed from the Suez in the following order: PASTEUR on 8 March; VICEROY OF INDIA on 11 March; BERGENSFORD on 12 April; VOLLENDAM on 13 April; S.S. NEW AMSTERDAM on 17 April; and ISLE DE FRANCE on 24 April. The 800 merchant seamen from India (250 officers and 556 other ranks) arrived in New York on 27 July aboard the

The total number of prisoners received in August was 5,944. By the end of August, there were 19,350 prisoners being held in Canada.

Owing to the difficulties in securing priorities for materials, the completion of the camp at Medicine Hat was delayed until January 1943. Medicine Hat was to be ready for occupancy in the third week of February. With this camp completed, the authorities would be able to handle 180 officers and 5,000 other ranks between 21 February and 6 March. The remaining 3,000 men could only be taken at the end of March 1943 because of the shortage of rolling stock available also had the Canadian authorities thinking about the conversion of Camp 133 at Ozada from a tented camp to a permanent camp. This changeover could be completed by the end of July 1943, and the camp could accommodate an additional 12,000 P.W. As a contingency plan in case of further prisoners being sent over, camps that had been closed down as part of the consolidation plan could be reopened, and a further 5,000 prisoners could be accommodated.

Thus the success of the British troops in North

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S.S. CAMERONIA. The QUEEN MARY arrived at New York on 21 July for the transport of prisoners. The steady flow of prisoners with 1,397 P.W. 1,586 German P.W. arrived on board the AQUITANIA at New York on 14 August, and another 1,594 disembarked from the QUEEN ELIZABETH on 20 August. Some 2,000 prisoners arrived at Norfolk on H.M.T. MAURETANIA on 16 September. 34 officers and 960 other ranks disembarked at Halifax from H.M.T. PASTEUR on 19 September. By the end of 1942, there were some 20,000 prisoners of war being held in Canada.

Africa against Rommel's Afrika Korps provided by far the largest number of prisoners sent to Canada in 1942. Their arrival forced the authorities to construct the largest camps used to that time, at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The Canadian Government was able to meet the challenge of housing these additional prisoners. However, there were problems with the prisoners already in camps over the shackling question that arose after Dieppe.

Chapter 7 - The Shackling Controversy And Its Ramifications  
in the Canadian Prisoner of War Camps.

The story of the British and Canadian participation at Dieppe is a well known one. The High Command would later argue that the lessons learned at Dieppe were of paramount value in preparing for the invasion of Europe. However, the truth of the matter was that the planners bungled the operation. The troops were sent in with insufficient naval and air support, and were sacrificed with no apparent material gains for their efforts. In addition to the material losses in the raid, there was spawned a controversy that threatened to terminate adherence to the Geneva Convention and ultimately lead to retaliation against prisoners held by both Allied and Axis powers. This controversy involved the shackling of prisoners while conducting a raid against enemy territories.

On the occasion of the Dieppe raid on 19 August 1942, the British operation order fell into the hands of the German Army. It was noted that in Appendix 1, paragraph IV, sub-paragraph B(2), the following statement was set forth:

"Whenever practicable the hands of prisoners of war are to be bound so that they may not destroy their papers."<sup>183</sup>

This order was in direct contravention to the Geneva Conven-

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<sup>183</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, p. 281184, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2212, 3 September 1942.

tion, but the authorities felt that it was necessary to ensure that the prisoners were safely brought away in the raid:

.....Reports from individuals concerning the operation indicate that in a few cases this instruction was put into effect for the time between the capture of the prisoners and their being placed on craft for return to the United Kingdom. These reports contain no evidence that German prisoners received any other treatment of a nature open to question under the rules of warfare.<sup>184</sup>

The German High Command announced that as a reprisal, all British officers and men captured at Dieppe were to be put into chains from 2 P.M. on 3 September, and this order was not to be revoked until the British Government withdrew in an official notification, the instructions given in the order to shackle. The War Office responded in a statement on the night of 2 September: "....It is categorically denied that any German had his hands tied. Any such order, if it was issued, will be cancelled."<sup>185</sup> As a result of this statement, the German High Command cancelled the proposed measures against British prisoners of war.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., Department of National Defence, RG 24, Vol. 2780, File H.Q.S. 7236-74 (1), Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2473, 9 October 1942.

<sup>185</sup> Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, p. 281184, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2212, 3 September 1942.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2224, 3 September 1942.



It was thought that the problem had been solved, but unfortunately it reared its ugly head one month later. The occasion was the British commando raid on the Channel Island of Sark, and the commandos were forced to fetter several German prisoners in order to ensure that they did not alert the garrison on the island to the presence of British troops. In retaliation, the German High Command announced that:

...from midday on 8 October all British officers and men taken prisoners at Dieppe shall be put in chains (in Fesseln Gelegt). This measure will remain in force until the British War Office proves that in future it will issue true statements on the binding of German prisoners of war and that it has acquired sufficient authority to see that its orders are carried out by its troops.<sup>187</sup>

The British Government decided to take a strong and uncompromising stand on the issue and it was felt that if the Germans detected a weakening on their part, the blackmail method would be repeated whenever convenient. The United Kingdom authorities responded therefore by stating that if the Germans went ahead with their plans, similar measures would be enacted against an equal number of German prisoners in British hands. The ultimate decision in this whole matter was taken by Prime Minister Winston Churchill.<sup>188</sup> The

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2457, 8 October 1942.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2416, pp. 281230-281231, 8 October 1942.

British plan was to handcuff the more important officers. Who would therefore be likely to be most effective in the protest to the German Government. The ratio would be one officer to twenty-five other ranks.

The German Government went through with their threat and at 12:00 hours on Thursday 8 October, they put 2,500 British officers and men in chains. On 9 October, the Canadian Government received a request from the United Kingdom Government that they implement the British threat and arrange for the fettering of some 2,000 P.W. in Canadian camps. The Canadian Government was not consulted before the decision to implement reprisals was taken. The Dieppe prisoners affected by the German shackling order were nearly all Canadians, and the German prisoners against whom the countermeasures would have to be taken (with the exception of some 200) were in Canadian camps. Mackenzie King, in Toronto at the time, was consulted by telephone, and his decision was that in the circumstances, the Canadian Government would have to comply inasmuch as they had already been committed by London. However, he felt that it should be made clear that the Canadian Government was most reluctant to take this course of action, and that they hoped that the fettering of prisoners on both sides would be of brief duration. The Canadian Cabinet War Committee approved the handcuffing of 1,100 German P.W. in Canada from noon on the

following day and agreed that the British Government be informed of the War Committee's views as to the wisdom of the policy, and the exception to the announcement of the decision without prior consultation with Canada.<sup>189</sup> The Canadian Government therefore acquiesced to the British demands out of a desire to avoid public differences with the United Kingdom.

At 09:00 hours on Saturday 10 October 1942, Camp Commandants assembled all prisoners in their camps and read both in English and German the following statement:

In direct contravention of Article 2 of the Geneva Convention, your Government put 2,500 of our officers and men in chains at 12:00 hours on Thursday 8 October. Your Government purport to have done this as a reprisal for alleged ill treatment of German prisoners of war taken at Dieppe and Sark by tying their hands. They have done this in spite of an announcement by the British Government that the latter do not and will not countenance any orders for the tying of hands of prisoners of war taken in the field. Your Government were told that if they persisted in their intention of carrying out reprisals, the British Government would be compelled in order to protect their own prisoners of war, to take similar measures upon an equal number of enemy prisoners of war in

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Vol. II, Minutes of Friday 9 October 1942.

Attendant at this meeting were Messrs, T.A. Crerar (Chairman), J.L. Ilsley, Michaud, Macdonald, St. Laurent, Norman Robertson, A.D.P. Heeney. Also present were Hume Wrong, Colonel Currie (Deputy Minister, Department of National Defence), Brigadier Nash (Vice Adjutant General) and Brigadier Kay (Deputy Adjutant General).

their hands. In spite of this announcement your Government have persisted in the threatened reprisal. In consequence, the British Government on Thursday gave your Government 48 hours to order the removal of the chains. The 48 hours will expire at 12:00 noon today and unless a favourable reply has been received from Germany by that hour, I shall be reluctantly compelled to shackle ( ) of you. You will have to wear these chains until 21:00 hours tonight and thenceforth from 09:00 hours until 21:00 hours daily until further orders.<sup>190</sup>

The prisoners were then dismissed to their quarters, and the camp staff proceeded to begin arrangements to shackle the appropriate numbers.

On the international level, the Canadian High Commissioner to Great Britain, Mr. Vincent Massey, expressed his disapproval of the actions of the British Government:

I have consulted Colonel Ralston and Mr. Howe on the question of compliance with the United Kingdom request that 2,000 German prisoners of war in Canada should be shackled at noon on Saturday. Ralston, Howe and I all disagree on principle with the whole policy of mutual reprisals. Ralston and myself, however, feel that as Canada has taken the stand that we are only acting as custodians for German prisoners of war transferred from the United Kingdom, there seems no alternative but to comply with the request of the United Kingdom Government. However, we are all three of us strongly of the opinion that the United Kingdom Government should be informed that our compliance with the United Kingdom request is made with

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2474, pp. 281242-281243, 9 October 1942.

reluctance, especially as we were not given an opportunity of being brought into consultation before the Cabinet decision was made here....there is evident danger that this whole situation will develop into competitive reprisals with no limit in sight. For example, you may have seen the communique of the German High Command that if the British announcement that an equal number of Germans will be manacled at noon tomorrow is put into effect, the German High Command will have three times as many British prisoners of war in 191 fetters as from noon tomorrow....

The Canadian Government agreed and pointed out to the United Kingdom authorities that a futile contest could result, and that in the application of brutality to the prisoners, the Germans were certain to win. The British Government attempted to soothe the ruffled feelings of the Canadians. Winston Churchill sent a personal telegram to Mackenzie King which stated: "Earnestly hope that you will stand by us in this anxious business in which we both have much at stake. Am sure it will be of short duration."<sup>192</sup> A letter also came from the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs which noted:

....We greatly regret that you should feel that the Canadian Government had been committed without consultation. Unfortunately the need for an immediate

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2477, pp. 281244-281245, 9 October 1942.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, p. 281252, #1861, Mackenzie King to Vincent Massey, 10 October 1942.

decision in the circumstances of the case precluded our consulting you fully as we should have wished. Like you, we are most anxious to avoid a contest with the Germans in harshness to prisoners of war and we felt that the decision we took was the best, calculated to put a speedy end to the matter....<sup>193</sup>

However, these words did not alleviate the problems of shackling, a problem that was threatening to escalate since the British authorities had decided to increase correspondingly the number of German prisoners manacled should the Germans carry out their threat to manacle three times the number of prisoners fettered by the British. This would involve the Canadian Government putting handcuffs on 3,888 Germans in total. Mr. Angus Macdonald, the Minister of National Defence for Naval Services, opposed any extension of the fettering of prisoners, and Hume Wrong, the Assistant Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, submitted a draft telegram to the United Kingdom Government urging that further fettering be at least delayed. Hopefully in the interim, every opportunity could be sought to obtain a settlement through the good offices of the Protecting Power and the International Red Cross Committee.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup>Ibid., Department of National Defence, RG 24, Vol. 2780, File H.Q.S. 7236-74(1), Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Mackenzie King, #209, 10 October 1942.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid., Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Vol. 11, Minutes of Saturday 10 October 1942.

Despite the fact that the Canadian Government had acquiesced to the demands of the British authorities and would fetter the required number of German prisoners, it was another matter for the authorities to convince the German prisoners of the validity of this course of action. The military authorities wished to shackle German prisoners from all branches of the Armed Services, but the Deputy Adjutant General stated that only Army personnel were to be handcuffed. This was fine in theory, but the German prisoners were changing uniforms with the naval and air personnel in an effort to evade the order.<sup>195</sup> The final figure settled upon for handcuffing was 160 German officers and 3,840 other ranks, for a total of 4,000 prisoners.<sup>196</sup> The initial response of the German prisoners was not encouraging. After hearing the shackling order, the prisoners at Monteith twice refused to leave their huts for parade and identification

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<sup>195</sup> The German action succeeded in causing confusion for the authorities. They then had to go to the pictures taken by the R.C.M.P. upon the arrival of the prisoners, identify the Army personnel required for shackling, gather these men, shackle them, and sequester them away from their fellow prisoners. Sometimes mistakes were made and Navy and Air Force personnel were shackled. They would then call for the Swiss Consul General, complaining that their rights had been abrogated. When it was found that a mistake had been made, these men received a formal apology from the Camp Commandant.

<sup>196</sup> The following prisoners were to be shackled: Calydor - 63 officers and 81 other ranks; Espanola - 206 other ranks; Monteith - 85 other ranks; Bowmanville - 97 officers and 46 other ranks; Ozada - 3,422 other ranks.

of those to be shackled. The Camp Commandant responded by withholding their meals until they appeared. At Espanola, the prisoners refused to answer to their names while on parade, and the Commandant was forced to keep them on parade twice since they defied his orders. At Gravenhurst, the camp leader resigned his position since he felt that he could not cooperate with the authorities in such a venture. The prisoners refused to obey the Commandant's orders and did not show up for the removal of manacles, nor did they parade for the Sunday morning roll call. Troops were sent into the compound to ensure that the buildings were vacated, and when the prisoners did show up in the parade square, they arrived without uniforms, which made it quite difficult for the authorities to identify the Army personnel. It was also found that most of the prisoners had removed their manacles and the cuffs could not be found.<sup>197</sup> When the military authorities heard of the passive and active resistance towards handcuffing, they alerted the Commandants to use the greatest care that no steps or actions were taken which might precipitate violence beyond such measures as

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<sup>197</sup> Keys were being made by those prisoners who were not shackled, and then were being thrown into the segregated portion of the enclosure where the manacled prisoners retrieved them and unlocked their shackles. The cuffs were later found melted down to molten metal in several of the stoves of the camp huts.



were absolutely necessary to enforce the orders issued.<sup>198</sup>

However as the days passed, the situation became more embittered. The worst outbreak of violence occurred at the Bowmanville camp where some 800 Germans (including 600 officers, 200 of whom were members of the Afrika Korps) were guarded by the men of No. 2 Company of the Veterans Guard of Canada. After Colonel James Masen Taylor M.C. read the proclamation, the German prisoners retreated to their barracks and built fortifications. They hid behind these improvised forts and greeted the troops that came to extricate them with dishes, sticks and stones. What followed was a sort of grim barroom brawl of gigantic dimensions, with five furious clashes occurring over the next fifty hours or so. The battle was fought almost entirely with truncheons, bricks, hockey sticks, crockery, boots and fists. When the required number of German prisoners had been fettered on the 12th, the casualty list listed only one man seriously injured by gunfire - a German officer.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of National Defence, RG 24, Vol. 2780, File H.Q.S. 7236-74(1), Memorandum of Brigadier O.M.M. Kay dated 10 October 1942.

<sup>199</sup>The German officer in question was shot after the German officers had captured Lieutenant George Brent M.M., one of Colonel Taylor's staff officers, who had been walking inside the compound. Brent had had the habit of hitting each of the German officers with his cane as they came out for daily parade, and he had earned their undying enmity. When he made the error of walking through the compound at the height of these problems, the Germans captured him, "roughed" him up, and momentarily held him as hostage. When one of the guards

Bowmanville was the only example of a very truculent attitude set forth by the German prisoners. In all the other cases, the resistance of the prisoners was passive, and this marked the only case where the resistance became active. When the authorities became aware of the difficulties at Bowmanville, they decided to proceed carefully with further shacklings:

Up to the present only a bare 400 have been shackled and in order to make up the first total it will be necessary to shackle approximately 700 in Ozada. In view of the temper of the prisoners at Ozada, it seems certain that the enforcement of the shackling order in that camp

in the watch tower noticed this, he shot the German officer in the leg. The Germans then scrambled into the hut, and Brent was retrieved by the guards. Casualties were about twenty-five on each side, with one man on each side being seriously injured (the sentry injured was hit in the head by a flying jam bottle during one of the melees, and suffered head injuries).

Colonel Taylor was against the shackling order, and commented almost twenty years later: "I felt at the time, and still do, that the decision to shackle a certain number of prisoners, which decision I understand was made by those in the higher brackets of authority, was not a wise decision and nothing was actually accomplished by it."

For the best descriptions of the "Battle of Bowmanville", see Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File SGR II 20: "A Maclean's Flashback: The World War II Battle They Fought In Canada" by Terence Robertson; and Terence Robertson's The Golden Horseshoe London: Pan Books, 1970. The latter is the biography of Otto Kretschmer, Captain of the U-99, and the most successful U-Boat commander in World War II. After he was captured in 1941, Kretschmer was sent to Canada and imprisoned at Bowmanville. Though he was not officially made the Camp Spokesman until September 1944, he was the main power behind the wire. He was in reality, the man behind the German challenge to the Camp authorities at the time of the crisis at Bowmanville.

would result in rioting and inevitably  
in shooting.<sup>200</sup>

The British Government approved of this cautious attitude, being cognizant of the problems it could cause in the Allied P.W. camps in Germany, and urged that:

...pending further communication from them, no steps should be taken to enforce shackling at Ozada which may result in rioting and shooting; also that the utmost secrecy should be maintained about reports that only 400 German prisoners of war have been shackled and that resistance has been encountered....<sup>201</sup>

The United Kingdom authorities felt that the trouble arising out of the enforcement of shackling was more undesirable than failure to shackle the full number originally envisaged, and enforcement should in no circumstances be pushed to the point of shooting.<sup>202</sup> That it did not go that far is a testimonial to the work of the Commandants at the various camps, and the Veterans Guard. Most of the members of the Guard had sons fighting in the war, and were not appreciative of the antics of the German prisoners. The temptation was there to retaliate against the German prisoners, but they refrained ---

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<sup>200</sup>Public Archives of Canada, W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, p. 281262, Mackenzie King to Vincent Massey, #1868, 12 October 1942.

<sup>201</sup>Ibid., p. 281264, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2505, 13 October 1942.

<sup>202</sup>Ibid., p. 281270, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2514, 13 October 1942.

an action that brought credit to the members of the Guard. The German prisoners did their utmost to upset procedures in the camps, and to cause havoc and difficulties for the authorities. At Gravenhurst, though the prisoners did not conduct as active a resistance as their counterparts at Bowmanville, they went out of their way to cause undue difficulty. In fact, they caused enough problems so that Adjutant-General H.F.G. Letson was moved to comment in a memo:

....(General Constantine) mentioned that Colonel Ellwood, the Commandant (at Gravenhurst) had handled the situation, in a very satisfactory manner with tact and judgment....<sup>203</sup>

Ellwood had to act with "wise tact and judgment", for the Germans were not cooperating with him to any extent:

....The Commandant had warned the prisoners that they must cease taking off their handcuffs and that it will be considered an offense to do so. He has taken away their privileges and has arrested two men for dumb insolence in that they did not rise when he inspected the quarters this morning. When he visited the officers quarters, the officers moved out into the parade grounds and when he endeavoured to speak to them, they walked away and paid no attention to him....in order to enforce discipline, the only course would be to arrest these officers for insolence and place them in detention barracks, but there

<sup>203</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of National Defence, RG 24, Vol. 2780, File H.Q.S. 7236-74(1), Memorandum of H.F.G. Letson, 15 October 1942.

is not sufficient accommodation in the District to handle such a number....<sup>204</sup>

During the two tense days of October 12 and 13, the Veterans Guard at Gravenhurst were very angry because of the lack of respect being shown by the prisoners and because of the difficulty that was being experienced. Ill feeling reached such a point that the troops threatened to use their bayonets. Colonel Ellwood saw the potential storm brewing and took the opportunity to address the troops and ask for restraint, cautioning them to remember the prisoners in Germany and their sons who were presently fighting overseas. The speech had the required effect, for the hostility never surfaced in any overt acts of violence on their part. The tension was lessened a little by the visit of the Swiss Vice-Consuls Oertly and Sembinelli on 17 October. The Swiss Consul, as did the District Officer Commanding, gave notice of the work done by Colonel Ellwood in preventing outbreaks of violence in the camp:

I am very pleased to have observed the spirit of cooperation in existence in this camp under the present difficult condition and I pay my respects and

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<sup>204</sup>Ibid., Memorandum of H.F.G. Letson, 16 October 1942.

The prisoners explained that their action was not a mark of disrespect against any officer in the camp, but a protest against the British uniform. They stated that they had nothing against the officers, but merely objected against the principle of handcuffing. The German officers also marched past the officers counting at parade and blew smoke into their faces; another action of disrespect.

compliments to the Camp Commandant and Major Bygate who was in charge of the guard, for having been able to handle the situation in so efficient and diplomatic a manner as plainly visible on the day of my visit.<sup>205</sup>

However, the situation deteriorated again on the night of the 20th when shots were fired into the enclosure by one of the guards. The prisoners in the huts had been breaking their handcuffs and throwing them into the recreation grounds in full view of the guard in the tower. There was a prisoner posted there in view of the guard, picking them up, and when he twice refused to obey the order to halt, a warning shot was fired into the compound. It ricocheted off a wall and through the window of the canteen, causing the prisoners to scurry and a protest to be sent to the Swiss Consul.

In view of the resistance encountered at the camps, the Canadian Government suspended handcuffing pending further developments. The Dominions Office felt that the German policy of reprisals was a concerted policy that had been developed between the Axis Governments to meet a variety of ends:

a) to use prisoners of war as hostages in an attempt to deflect us from employing most effectively certain forms of warfare, especially bombing

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<sup>205</sup>Ibid., Colonel Ellwood to Commissioner of Internment Operations, 17 October 1942.

In this case, Colonel Ellwood is quoting the words of the Swiss Consul.

and commando raids b) to use reprisals on our prisoners of war as part of a war of nerves directed against the civilian population on our side, especially relatives of prisoners of war c) to sow dissension as between the respective Governments of the United Nations by the announcement that all prisoners of war of the Allied nations captured on all fronts will be treated as one unit in respect of reprisals....<sup>206</sup>

On 23 October, Vincent Massey suggested the desirability of moving the United Kingdom Government to state that all German prisoners would be unshackled on a specified date as evidence of their determination to uphold the Geneva Convention.<sup>207</sup> The telegram incorporating these thoughts received the blessing of the Cabinet War Committee and was sent to the United Kingdom authorities. Unfortunately, this plea fell on deaf ears as Mr. Churchill felt that the British should wait for a reply from the German Government; and these thoughts were set forth in a personal message to Prime Minister King. A reply was sent expressing willingness to let the question stand for the moment, but reaffirming the hope that some solution might be found.<sup>208</sup> However, the

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, p. 281289, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2588, 22 October 1942.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., pp. 281295-281298, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2592, 23 October 1942.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Minutes of 11 November 1942.

German Government gave notice at the end of November that it refused to consider unshackling unless it received official notification that the British Government had issued a general order forbidding any binding of prisoners in the future.<sup>209</sup> In light of this development, the War Committee agreed that the United Kingdom Government should be informed through the Canadian High Commissioner that in the circumstances, the Canadian Government proposed to take independent action towards unshackling prisoners, either by a direct approach to the Swiss Government or by fixing an early date by which the shackling of prisoners in Canada would cease, irrespective of action taken by the United Kingdom or German Governments.<sup>210</sup> On 10 December 1942, following the despatch by the Swiss Government of identical communications to the belligerents suggesting such action, the British and Canadian Governments announced that German prisoners in their hands would be unshackled on 12 December 1942. This action was duly completed, but there was no reaction by the German Government. The latter, it appeared, was still demanding "effective guarantees" against the issuance of further orders for the tying of prisoners. On 17 January 1943, the

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid., W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1; pp. 281449-281450, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, #2970, 30 November 1942.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c Minutes of 30 November 1942.



Chief of the General Staff in Canada (General Stuart) informed the General Officer Commander in Chief (G.O.C. in C.) First Canadian Army by cable that following an inquiry from the Dominion Government, the military members of Council had unanimously subscribed to the policy that "in future, prisoners of war should not be shackled in the field." In reply to a request for his comments, the G.O.C. in C. concurred in this policy. On 27 January, the Canadian authorities in the United Kingdom received the text of a proposed draft note to the German Government and of a memorandum by the War Office upon which the note was based. It was founded on the basis that binding could only be countenanced when particular operational conditions made it essential in the interests of the safety of the prisoner and when any other action would be less humane. The Chief of the General Staff and the G.O.C. in C. accepted the War Office view.<sup>211</sup> On 6 February, the High Commissioner in London despatched to Canada a draft Army Council Instruction (A.C.I.) which laid down the treatment of prisoners on capture, prescribing treatment on humane principles as provided in the Geneva Convention. While it accepted the view that the prisoners might be tied on the battlefield, it stated that such measures were to be adopted only in the case of operational necessity. It

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., W.L.M. King Papers, MG 26, J1, Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, p. 298172, #202, 27 January 1943.

added that "no order providing for the general tying of prisoners will be issued." The draft A.C.I. was accompanied by the draft of a secret letter to army commanders, which stated that while local operational necessity might sometimes dictate the tying of prisoners, this should be limited to the duration of the period of necessity, and no order inconsistent with the proposed A.C.I. would be issued. The letter further provided that troops in contact with the enemy would not in the future carry written orders dealing with the treatment of prisoners.<sup>212</sup> On 9 February 1943, Canada House was informed that Mr. Churchill had directed the issuance of the proposed A.C.I. and the secret letter, and that he had approved the despatch of a note to Germany reporting the tenor of this action (including the reservation made in the interest of operational necessity), affirming the determination of H.M. Government to abide by the Geneva Convention, and stating that the Governments of the Commonwealth considered a combatant entitled to its protection from the moment of capture.<sup>213</sup>

So ended the crisis precipitated by the shackling question. The German Government never formally rescinded its shackling order, but it was found that after a time, the

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., Vincent Massey to Mackenzie King, pp. 298204-298210, #'s 269 and 271, 6 February 1943.

<sup>213</sup> Department of National Defence, Directorate of History, File 594.019 (D6), Dieppe Raid 1942.

imposition of shackles lapsed. The United Kingdom Government decided not to press for an official German withdrawal, since this would bring public attention to the question again, and perhaps lead the German Government into adhering to shackling once again. In Canada, the problem dissipated after the first few weeks of difficulties, and the authorities were soon back to attempting to run the Directorate.

Chapter 8 - The Consolidation of Camps, Transfer of Authority  
And The Establishment of Labour Projects.

On 19 November 1942, the Governor General in Council passed Order in Council P.C. 10571 which made the Department of National Defence responsible for:

...the supervision of the carrying out of the policy of the Government of Canada and for the guarding, disciplining, control, and the welfare of enemy prisoners of war; and for the establishment, maintenance, administration and provision of supplies for such internment stations or camps....The Department of the Secretary of State for External Affairs shall be responsible for dealing with all prisoners of war and internment problems in their international aspects, particularly in regard to the enforcement of duties imposed and rights given by international law; implementing of conventions; liaison with other governments and communication with the International Red Cross and the protecting power for enemy interests.<sup>214</sup>

It was noted that prisoners of war were held in separate camps and stations from enemy aliens and other internees, and had to be treated in a different manner. Administration of discipline and prevention of escapes required constant watchfulness on the part of responsible authorities. Thus it was considered that the control of prisoners of war and the administration of internment camps and stations used for their confinement should be vested in one Department of the Government - the Department of National Defence. The

<sup>214</sup>P.C. 10571, 19 November 1942.

Department of the Secretary of State would continue to deal with the international aspects of the problem. It was hoped that this transfer of total authority for the care and treatment of the prisoners to the Department of National Defence would ease the bureaucratic strain faced by the Directorate and lead to the efficient handling of the prisoners. These changes were further reiterated in P.C. 36/500 of 22 January 1943, which transferred the responsibility for the custody of all prisoners of war, enemy aliens, other interned persons and refugees in Canada to the Department of National Defence.<sup>215</sup>

The camps at Medicine Hat and Lethbridge were the first to be designed exclusively for use as internment sites for prisoners of war. They were both close to needed sources of fuel, energy, water, sewage and electricity. The tented camp at Ozada (on the Morley Flats about 40 miles west of Calgary) was established to provide a site close to the main camps in order to cut the costs of the move when the camps were completed. Ozada was not far from the power plant on the Bow River at Seebe, and water could be pumped in from the Kananaskis River. The two main camps were occupied in November 1942 and May 1943 respectively. The occupied 6,250,000 square feet, each of the four sides of the enclosure having a length of 2,500 feet. There were 36

<sup>215</sup>P.C. 36/500, 22 January 1943.

dormitories in the camp, each designed for 350 men sleeping in double bunks, and they had the dimensions 160' x 36' x 10'. This provided 32.1 square feet of floor space per man, or 492 cubic feet per head.<sup>216</sup> The camps had two large recreation halls, measuring 145' x 140' with a seating capacity of 3,000 men each. In addition, there were in each camp six educational huts (24' x 120'), six workshops of the same size, six packing storage barracks (120' x 48') and six messhalls and kitchens measuring 150' x 63', of which a space of 63' x 36' was used for kitchen space. The capacity of each of the six dining halls was 800 men each. Cooking and heating of the dormitories was done by natural gas.

In addition to these camps, a new officers' camp was opened at Grande Lygne in Quebec. The site chosen for the camp was the Feller Institute (a Baptist school) approximately 30 miles south of Montreal. The Government leased the buildings and 240 acres of land for a period of at least 17 months, at a rental fee of approximately \$15,000 per annum.<sup>217</sup> This camp would handle the overflow of officer prisoners who had come in from the Middle East and could not be accommodated at the other officer camps.

The arrival of the New Year had seen fresh requests from the United Kingdom authorities that the Canadians accept

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<sup>216</sup>The Canadian Army standard is 400 cubic feet per head.

<sup>217</sup>P.C. 10854, 1 December 1942.

further prisoners. As of December 1942, there were 22,235 prisoners in internment and refugee camps in Canada, and of these, 16,533 were combatant prisoners and 3,311 were enemy ~~merchant~~ seamen. Authority had already been given by the Cabinet War Committee for the acceptance of 5,000 more prisoners who were expected to arrive during the first part of 1943. After further discussion regarding British requests, the Cabinet War Committee agreed that Canada make no further commitments for the acceptance of prisoners and that the British Government be so informed of this decision.<sup>218</sup> However, it was felt by the authorities that some 17,000 additional prisoners could be accommodated in Canada by 1 September 1943, conditional upon the United Kingdom authorizing the building of a third large camp at Ozada, which would hold an additional 10,000 prisoners.<sup>219</sup>

On 10 May 1943, an Order in Council authorized the Minister of Labour to use prisoners in agricultural and other labour projects.<sup>220</sup> This decision was the fruition of a long struggle by the Canadian authorities to be permitted to work the German prisoners, who could supply a large force of potential work capabilities. In keeping with the rules

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<sup>218</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Minutes of Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Minutes of Wednesday 9 December 1942.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., Cabinet War Committee Document #359, 8 December 1942.

<sup>220</sup>P.C. 2326, 10 May 1943.

of warfare, the authorities followed Article 31 of the Geneva Convention: "Work done by prisoners of war shall have no direct connection with the operation of the war. In particular, it is forbidden to employ prisoners in the manufacture or transport of arms or munitions of any kind or any transport of material destined for combatant units."

After his successes with the Works Program, Major D.J. O'Donahoe felt that a similar achievement could be obtained with the German combatant prisoners. He suggested that they be used to raise hogs, mine coal, build sectional huts and pit props, make clothing, work on the dehydration of food (for use in Army and P.W. camps), and reforestation.

O'Donahoe's idea was to employ the prisoners on or near the camps, under guard, and have them do the aforementioned tasks. The output from this work would be used for the maintenance of the prisoners, or would be sold to the Department of National Defence. It was a method of getting some useful work out of the German prisoners who could not be used in outside employment. In Great Britain, successful use was being made of Italian prisoners of war through having them work on hostels and farms. It was felt at first that Italian prisoners could be used in "outside employment" here, and that the authorities would address a specific request to the United Kingdom for the transfer of Italian prisoners. However, it was decided to use the prisoners already on hand.



Prisoners (other ranks) were to be employed on a voluntary basis, and were to be transferred from internment camps to labour camps, under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour.<sup>221</sup> The prisoners at Lethbridge were to be utilized in the local sugar beet fields on the basis of daily transportation to and from the employment site. Criteria were established in order that the best prisoners be selected for the labour program. It was felt that non-combatant prisoners who volunteered would be preferable to combatant prisoners. Prisoners who had recently arrived in Canada would be unsuitable for this type of employment. The camps in Alberta and Ontario were the sites chosen for the first steps in this plan. A prospective employer would sign an application form and volunteers would then be sought at the nearest internment camp. These men would then sign a form to show their willingness to do the work involved and to follow certain regulations governing their conduct and safekeeping.

The first prisoners to work were a group of 100 Italian internees from Camp 43 on St. Helen's Island who worked at the Standard Chemical Works at South River, Ontario,

<sup>221</sup> The Canadian Institute of Public Opinion (the Gallup Poll of Canada) polled the Canadian public in the spring of 1943, asking the question "Would you approve or disapprove if German prisoners of war in Canada were placed in essential war work in gangs under armed guards." Opinion seemed to be fairly evenly divided on this issue with 42% approval; 46% disapproval; and 12% undecided.

starting on 18 July 1943. However, they were replaced on 2 August by 60 German P.W. from Petawawa.

As the program began to gather momentum, the authorities had to consider which industries would receive the benefit of the usage of these prisoners and how they were to be used. With war production in high gear and the factories and munition plants producing an endless stream of war materials, it was inevitable that some of the smaller industries would feel the pinch of a labour shortage. By 1943, it was becoming increasingly difficult to supply workers for lumbering, agriculture, brick plants, tanneries and other smaller industries, all indirectly vital to the war effort. Employers applying to the Department of Labour for prisoners of war had first to specify their accommodation, and secondly to allow inspection of their work camps by a Department of Labour official before prisoners were shipped to them. The location had also to be approved by the R.C.M.P. from a general security angle. In every case where an inspection showed that the proposed accommodation was inadequate, the application was refused or postponed until the quarters were improved to meet the necessary specifications. In keeping with the terms of the Geneva Convention, work camps were to be considered as an annex of the base internment camp and suitable quarters, hygiene, medical welfare, recreation, and the right to register complaints

with the Protecting Power, all provided for in the regulations covering base camps, were to be applicable to work camps. An establishment was necessary to handle this new project. Considering the many varied interests that had to be coordinated (Treasury, National Defence, employers, External Affairs, R.C.M.P., International Red Cross, P.W., Geneva Convention), the organization had to be fairly comprehensive. To meet this situation, a Directorate of Labour Projects P.W. was organized, and Lieutenant Colonel R.S.W. Fordham appointed as Director.<sup>222</sup> On 30 June 1943, an Order in Council was passed authorizing the Department of Labour to hire and equip civilian guards on the various projects. This hiring was a result of the fact that the Department of National Defence was unable to provide guards because of the shortage of enlistments in the Veterans Guard of Canada. The civilian guards did not prove a success<sup>223</sup> and it became imperative, when the use of P.W.

<sup>222</sup> P.C. 5022, 2 June 1943.

<sup>223</sup> The major reason that the civilian guards did not prove a success was the fact that they were civilian in nature. As the Standing Orders for the Veterans Guard Details noted: "All those concerned in the employment of P.W. should bear in mind that these P.W. are soldiers, trained to react to military discipline..." This was the problem - the guards were not military personnel, and the prisoners did not feel that they were called upon to answer to them. This led to a high incidence of escapes, especially at the Riding Mountain Camp. In a letter to the Deputy Minister of Labour dated 11 January 1944, Lt.-Col. Fordham commented: "I recommend dispensing with the services of all the civilian guards at the Riding Mountain Camp....fewer guards properly trained could

was extended to the combatant class, to have them guarded by the armed forces of the Detaining Power.<sup>224</sup> With an increase in the complement of the Veterans Guard, the civilian guards were dispensed with and their duties taken over by National Defence.

The majority of the first prisoners sent out were employed by the lumber companies in cutting fuel wood, contracted for by the Department of Munitions and Supply to relieve an expected fuel shortage in the country. A considerable quantity of wood was cut by the prisoners, thus helping to a great extent to avert the threatened shortage.

The rate of pay agreed upon with the employing companies was \$2.50 per working day per prisoner. From this sum the company deducted \$1.00 per day for each prisoner and guard boarded, and a further 50¢ was put to the credit of each P.W. against which he might charge the purchase price of certain specified articles in the company's stores. The

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look after the security at the camp more efficiently and it would appear that properly trained men in sufficient numbers are to be found only among Army personnel..." J.S. Whalley, the Wood Fuel Controller for the Department of Munitions and Supply, noted in a letter to Mr. J.G. Fogo, the Associate Coordinator of Controls, on 26 January 1944 that: "....These guards are...not in uniform; they simply carry a red band on the arm; they act in the capacity of shepherds....to an uninitiated layman there is a casualness that is certainly not conducive to mass production....these guards are first an ornament and the very casualness of their demeanor which they probably can't do anything about is reflected in the attitude of the prisoners to the whole job...."

<sup>224</sup>P.C. 28/5267, 30 June 1943.

prisoner was not to work longer hours than those permissible for civilian workers in the locality where they were employed, and one 24 hour period per week was set aside for rest.

Along with employing these prisoners, the Canadian Government had to keep in mind further requests on the part of the British authorities to house additional prisoners from Tunisia. At the end of the Tunisian campaign in the spring of 1943, there were some 100,000 German combatant P.W. in North Africa in the custody of British forces. The United States Government was prepared to accept up to 150,000 prisoners on behalf of the United Kingdom Government. However, their transfer would sacrifice a valuable counter in bargaining with Germany regarding the treatment of British and Dominion prisoners in German hands. It was expected that with the increase in captures of German P.W., the Commonwealth might be able to secure better treatment for British prisoners, and this advantage would be lost were such prisoners to be handed over to the United States for custody. Compared to the efforts being made by the other Commonwealth countries, it appeared that Canada was not bearing her full share of the burden.<sup>225</sup> By May 1943, the War Committee had given

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<sup>225</sup> The problem that faced the Cabinet War Committee was where in British territory could these prisoners be accommodated? The advice from the Department of National Defence was that on security grounds, Canada alone, of all parts of the Empire and Commonwealth, offered suitable location for permanent

approval to the acceptance of 29,000 P.W. of all categories. By July 1943, the Government was within 4,400 prisoners of the authorized number. The problem at hand was to provide accommodation for the 100,000 P.W. at temporary camps in North Africa, and to plan accommodation for prisoners captured in present and future campaigns. A Committee called together by the Department of External Affairs (representing External Affairs, National Defence, Labour, Munitions and Supply) urged that the Cabinet War Committee accept, within a 30 day period, an additional 10,000 prisoners of war over and above those already in Canada, to include: 660 German Enemy Merchant Seamen, 2,600 Italian P.W., 6,740 German P.W. All of these prisoners could be accommodated without the construction of new camps. The Committee further recommended that the War Committee authorize immediate completion of Ozada to hold an additional 12,000 prisoners. Immediate authorization would ensure that the camp would be ready for May 1944. They also urged that the Quartermaster General consult with other Government departments as to the possibility of providing accommodation for an additional 48,000 P.W. during 1944.<sup>226</sup> After discussion of the points raised

P.W. camps. In July 1943, India, South Africa, the Middle East and the United Kingdom had provided permanent accommodation for over 50,000 prisoners each. At the same time, Canada was holding 24,600 prisoners.

<sup>226</sup> This sum was over and above the immediate acceptance of the 10,000 P.W. asked for by the Committee, and also

by this External Affairs Committee, the Cabinet War Committee agreed to the immediate acceptance of the 10,000 P.W., but deferred action with respect to the Committee's other recommendations.<sup>227</sup> The British Government promised to despatch the prisoners as soon as shipping was available.

With the acceptance of further prisoners, emphasis was placed on pushing ahead with the Labour projects, and involving as many prisoners as possible. By 10 August 1943, authority had been granted for the go-ahead on four projects, employing 1,400 prisoners.<sup>228</sup> An error on one of the projects opened the way for the alteration of the original scheme. On 13 August, 100 P.W. from the Seebe internment

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excluded the 12,000 prisoners who could be accommodated by the completion of the camp at Ozada.

<sup>227</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Minutes of Thursday 15 July 1943.

The Minister of Finance pointed out the implications of accepting further large numbers in respect to construction, materials, labour and cost. He felt that this accommodation could be made available much more economically and efficiently in the United States.

<sup>228</sup> Project #1 had a capacity of 500 men, and 100 were presently employed on hoeing crops near Lethbridge. Project #2 consisted of three individual labour projects - a) a project for 100 men cutting wood at Thurso, Quebec was awaiting confirmation from Munitions and Supply. b) a wood cutting project at South River, Alberta had a capacity of 200 men. Some 60 prisoners were employed at this time. c) An irrigation project at Brooks, Alberta would employ 100 P.W. Project #3 called for 200 P.W. to unload grain at Fort William, and was awaiting further word from the Department of Labour. Project #4 called for individual farming for 300 P.W. at Metcalfe, Ontario. Some 35 anti-Nazis from Camp 32 reported for employment on individual farms at Metcalfe.

camp were delivered to Brooks, Alberta and taken over by Lieutenant Colonel E.S. Doughty. The intention was that they were to be placed in five small hostels previously selected, and taken therefrom daily by farmer employers and returned each night. Colonel Doughty, in good faith, rather exceeded the instructions given to him and placed a number of these men individually on farms, and permitted them to live on the farmers premises on a monthly basis. Lieutenant Colonel Fordham decided not to disturb the situation and gave it a trial. Unfortunately, the Calgary military headquarters got wind of these developments, and the prisoners were ordered to be returned to camp on 29 August. With the success of the experiment, Fordham formally applied to N.D.H.Q. for a continuation of the scheme. As some of the farms were 25 miles from the nearest hostel, it was not practical for farmers to be expected to go back and forth daily between the farms and the hostels.<sup>229</sup> As a result of conferences with the Vice Adjutant General, authorization was given for prisoners to continue residing on the farms of their employers.<sup>230</sup>

The Labour projects were divided into several

<sup>229</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 156, File 611.1 : 21-1, Lt. Col. R.S.W. Fordham to A. MacNamara, 31 August 1943.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., Lt. Col. R.S.W. Fordham to A. MacNamara, 1 September 1943.



groupings, each of which will be examined separately. As mentioned earlier, the first P.W. project was organized in Alberta where labour was supplied from the camp at Lethbridge for work in the beet fields. An average of 500 P.W. were employed in that manner during the summer of that year. Results were not satisfactory due to the working time lost in conveying P.W. and guards from the camp to individual farms and returning them at night. The labour project became better organized in 1944. Four hostels were erected on the project, housing 400 P.W., and an additional 400 conveyed daily from the camp. One of the biggest problems that was faced by the employers was the tendency on the part of the Germans to slow down production. It was not until the early spring of 1945 that the Director of Labour Projects, in cooperation with the Department of National Defence, instituted detention camps for the punishing of trouble makers, and erased this particular nuisance. In 1945, nine hostels were operating at Lethbridge and some 2,200 P.W. employed in sugar beet work and hoe crops. The program was successful enough in Alberta that, following a series of conferences, arrangements were made to supply the Province of Ontario with P.W. labour for the beet fields around Chatham. Following the pattern established in Alberta, a hostel was erected at Chatham under military control. From the hostel, P.W. were allotted to the beet field farms as

directed by the agricultural representative of the Province, with the Director of Labour Projects in overall control from Ottawa. The project was quite successful, and the hostel was reopened by common consent in the summer of 1945 on an even larger scale, together with three other hostels at Glencoe, Fingal and Centralia, which housed in all some 869 P.W. P.W. were also sent to assist the Province of Saskatchewan with her grain harvest in 1944. In 1945, Manitoba also sought help with her beet fields, and six hostels were opened to house 386 P.W. At the height of the harvest season, this number was raised to over 1,100. Thus during the summer of 1945, an average of 3,123 P.W. were working on the beet fields of three provinces, with this number being increased to 4,172 during the harvest season.

Prisoners were also used in wood cutting at the Riding Mountain camp in the province of Manitoba. This camp has been mentioned earlier in our study, but a few words of amplification might be helpful. The camp had been originally established by the Wartime Housing Corporation at the instance of the Fuel Wood Controls Act. The camp had been built for the purpose of cutting fuelwood to offset a likely fuelwood shortage in Canada and had been operated by the Department of Munitions and Supply (Fuel Controller). At first, it had turned out to be a costly venture instead of a success.

However, an Order in Council authorized the Department of

Labour to take over the camp.<sup>231</sup> In an arrangement made in September 1944, the Department of Labour undertook to provide 10,000 cords of fuelwood by 31 March 1945, which the Department of Munitions and Supply undertook to market. The number of P.W. working on the project was steadily reduced until 150 of the best workers remained to fulfil the contract. By the assigned date, there were 10,900 cords piled and delivered. Subsequent to this date, the camp was kept open from month to month awaiting definite instructions as to whether more fuelwood would be necessary or whether the camp would be utilized for any other purpose. In August 1945, it was decided by the Department of Munitions and Supply to hand the camp over to the War Assets Corporation for disposal. The removal of the final P.W. took place in November 1945.

Prisoner labour was also utilized in lumbering operations. The first prisoners were assigned in small numbers in Quebec, averaging 340 from August 1943 to the end of the year, while for the first five months of 1944, an average of 356 P.W. were employed. This project was disrupted, however, when the Quebec Government requested that all P.W. be withdrawn from labour projects.<sup>232</sup> The only

<sup>231</sup>P.C. 4428, 9 June 1944.

<sup>232</sup>This is a difficult question to answer, for primary sources do not yield any information. The author speculates that this is another example of the poor relations that existed between Quebec and Ottawa.

exception to this request were those sent out for work from the camps at Farnham and Newington. In Ontario, employment of P.W. started in September 1943, and by December a total of 1,080 were working in Ontario camps. Production was not as high as was anticipated in 1944, but the replacement of the poorer workers led to an increase in productivity. The year 1945 saw the labour projects well organized and running smoothly.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, an Order in Council established P.W. as resident labourers on farms.<sup>233</sup> On 9 August 1943, the first batch of 35 P.W. (increased to 40 by the end of the year) was placed on individual farms in Carleton County, Ontario.<sup>234</sup> At the same time, 200 E.M.S. were working on the hostel at Brooks, Alberta. During 1944, the number of P.W. in Carleton County had risen to 68, and the Brooks project had reached 250 men in the summer and 200 men during the winter. Owing to an increased demand for farm labour, a second hostel was opened at Strathmore, Alberta, where an average of 150 P.W. were made available to individual farmers, summer and winter. During 1945, the number of P.W. employed in Carleton County had risen to 205, while the Brooks and Strathmore projects provided an average

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<sup>233</sup>P.C. 5864, 24 July 1943.

<sup>234</sup>These prisoners were Canadian nationals who had been held at Camp 32 in Hull.

of 400 P.W. in the summer and 350 in the winter. Another 80 P.W. were utilized on individual farms in the Port Arthur area by the end of 1945.

Can the utilization of prisoner of war labour be deemed a success? Once they were started working, the authorities realized with chagrin that this valuable commodity had been allowed to loiter in the camps at public expense without any use being made of the great potential that existed with these workers. For the minor sum of 50 cents a day, great work could be accomplished in the areas of farming, beet harvesting, and lumbering. Great financial benefits accrued to the Federal Government. For example the net amounts received from the employers and credited to the account of the Receiver General were as follows:

1943 ( 7 months)	\$ 155,948.15	
1944 (12 months)	<del>\$</del> 675,108.47	235
1945 (12 months)	\$2,427,123.81	

In regards to the sugar beet harvesting, the tonnage handled by the prisoners was astounding, and illustrated what a labour saver they were for the Federal Government:

1944:	18,344 tons sugar beets;	
	sugar content 6,454,000 lbs.	
1945:	66,814 tons sugar beets;	
	sugar content 22,704,000 lbs.	236

This operation netted the Dominion Treasury \$259,936.68 in

<sup>235</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of Labour, RG 27, Vol. 965, File 24, History of Labour Projects PW.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid.

the year 1945.<sup>237</sup> The sugar beet projects in Ontario netted the Province after expenses, \$100,000 by the end of the 1945 season.<sup>238</sup> The profit that came to the Dominion Treasury after sugar beet harvesting in 1945 was \$54,000.<sup>239</sup>

The placing of individual prisoners on individual farms was also a great financial success. Net revenue was as follows:

1943	\$ 8,126.15	
1944	\$ 60,837.48	
1945	\$127,425.49	<sup>240</sup>

As can be evidenced from these figures, the establishment of labour projects was an unqualified success. In the words of one author in attempting to summarize the work of the Labour Projects:

To some basic industries the infusion of this labour was a veritable life giving plasma enabling them to revive and continue their vigorous contribution to the Nation's war effort.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

## Chapter 9 - Intelligence, Counter-Intelligence And The Termination of Internment Operations.

One of the little known aspects of the internment operations here in Canada was the constant battle being waged between Canadian and British intelligence officers and the German prisoners within the camps. The organization of the Directorate included liaison with postal censorship, the Joint Intelligence Committee, the Psychological Warfare Committee, the R.C.M.P., and other groups pertinent to the security of the country. Contacts were also kept with the R.C.N. and the R.C.A.F. regarding intelligence gathered from German prisoners, pertinent to their respective services. This information was also sent to the War Office in London for transmission to the R.N. and R.A.F.

After the arrival of so many prisoners in Canada in 1943, it was decided to establish a Psychological Warfare Committee to establish programmes of segregation and re-education of prisoners. This decision had developed from disturbances at Camp 133 in the summer of 1942. That summer had seen the German prisoners housed in the tented camp at Ozada, while the permanent camps at Lethbridge and Medicine Hat were completed. June 1942 saw unseasonably cold, damp weather which was unusual for the area, and rainfall had been extraordinarily high. The prisoners were disturbed with the climatic conditions being experienced in the camp,

and set out to show their displeasure by rioting on 22 July 1942. Twenty-eight prisoners were charged with "an act prejudicial to the good order and discipline among P.W." In a summary hearing on 10-11 August, 28 prisoners were charged, and of these, 17 were acquitted, 9 received 28 days detention, and 2 were remanded for court-martial. In analysing the disturbance, Captain F.C. Mason noted that:

....There is more than a suspicion that the demonstration has been instigated by former P.W. from Camp 21 who have been transferred to Camp 133. Firstly there is no doubt that the present demonstration has been carefully organized as the contents of the letters and the listed complaints are almost identical in all cases. Another circumstance which also seems to bear out this assumption is that the P.W. who recently arrived from Egypt appeared to be well contented with the camp condition at first. It was only after they had been in the camp for about a fortnight or so that they started to complain. Secondly the technique employed is practically the same as that employed at a similar demonstration at Camp 21 some time ago....<sup>242</sup>

In analyzing the causes and effects of this disturbance, Colonel H.N. Streight, the Commissioner of Internment Operations noted:

...evidence is quite conclusive that the Committee which is comprised of this Gestapo element order and foster and enlarge on all complaints, which

<sup>242</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Director of Internment Operations, RG 6, I, Vol. 24, File 9-1-3, Captain F.C. Mason to Colonel H.N. Streight, 28 July 1942.



is in keeping with the German doctrine. ...they were instructed what to complain about and that they must not write anything favourable of camp conditions, but must always complain. This order is issued to all new P.W. when arriving at internment camps....<sup>243</sup>

Even Captain J.A. Milne, the British Intelligence Officer at the camp, noted what was going on behind the wire:

....the Gestapo element within the enclosure is extremely active and it is known that it threatens with direct penalties - ostracism here etc. and a court martial with the death penalty in Germany after the war - to any P.W. who gives any information to the Camp Staff of any kind whatsoever. The Gestapo watches the P.W. who is called to the interpreter's office - and queries him as to the subject of the interview and his replies on return. They pressed strongly that no P.W. be interviewed except in the presence of another P.W. designated by the camp leader. The camp newspaper threatens denunciations. The layout of the camp makes it impossible to smuggle out a prisoner for an unseen interview. The Gestapo element issues orders that it is "their duty as German soldiers, to complain as much as possible and never to write home anything nice about the British or Canadian authorities."<sup>244</sup>

During 1943, Intelligence work in the camp was carried on by the Camp Interpreter, whose duty it was to read incoming and

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., Colonel H.N. Streight to Special Section P.W. Department of External Affairs, 23 December 1942.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., Captain J.A. Milne to Commandant, 26 December 1942.

outgoing mail, gather facts through interviews with various prisoners, and generally find out what was going on behind the wire. Finally in 1944, there was a shuffle in Intelligence work. The new roles were outlined in a memo to the District Intelligence Officers:

....All aspects of P.W. Intelligence and Counterintelligence at this Headquarters (M.I. 3) are shortly to be under the direction of the D.M.I. M.I. 3 will assume the duties of P.W. Counter Intelligence while a new section of D.M.I. (M.I. 5) will take care of the psychological warfare and other aspects pertaining to P.W. Intelligence. In the very near future, selected personnel from P.W. Camp Interpreter Staffs together with other selected officers are to take an intensive short course in P.W. intelligence and security. By this means it is hoped that each P.W. camp will have in the shortest possible time, the service of a trained Intelligence Officer at its disposal. The D.M.I. also hopes at a later date to have the D.I.O.'s in whose districts P.W. camps are located, visit Ottawa for the purpose of familiarizing themselves with the set up and requirements here....<sup>245</sup>

The duty of this establishment was:

to develop and disseminate intelligence derived from prisoners of war at present

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<sup>245</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of National Defence, RG 24, A, Vol. 2296, File H.Q.S. 31 Vol. 1, Memo to District Intelligence Officers M.D. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 13, 31 May 1944.

The D.M.I. was the Directorate of Military Intelligence. M.I. 3 was Military Intelligence 3 and took care of P.W. Counter-Intelligence. M.I. 5 was Military Intelligence 5 which took care of Psychological Warfare and other aspects pertaining to P.W. Intelligence. D.I.O. referred to the District Intelligence Officer.

in Canadian custody and to provide facilities for the Psychological Warfare Committee (Ottawa) to carry on its functions in conformity with the policies and program of the Psychological Warfare Board, London, and with its own policy respecting the re-education of prisoners of war....<sup>246</sup>

M.I. 5 was to study and report on attitudes of prisoners' reactions to educational programs, and the influences of the Nazi pressure groups in order to provide guidance for the segregation and educational policies of the Psychological Warfare Committee. The M.I. 5 Intelligence Section was also to assist in the carrying out of educational programs, and was to collect various types of materials for broadcast to German civilians and troops. The Security Intelligence Sub-Section (M.I. 3d) was to glean and handle information covering matters such as counterintelligence information on escapes and intended escapes; detection of code and secret writing equipment; security and liaison with other security services. Searching for secret codes included perusal for secret writing cases, and other unauthorized means of communication, including secret messages via parcels and letters delivered by guards.

A conference of the Internment Camp Commandants was held on 22-23 June 1944, at which the objectives and proposed methods of the Section were outlined, and the

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid., Memo to all Districts, All Commands, 5 July 1944.

problems connected with them discussed. The conference expressed support of the aims, and made valuable suggestions with regard to methods. From 26-29 June 1944, a course was held for Interpreter Officers at which objectives and proposed methods were explained in greater detail.

The importance of the work of these men scarcely needs emphasis. The grave danger of returning some 200,000 young, physically fit and thoroughly indoctrinated Nazis to Germany after the war was quite obvious. The authorities decided to "open their minds" to ideas more in harmony with those of the democracies, and thus make these returning soldiers potential centres of political and social sanity in post war Germany.

The number of items of military significance that the Interpreter Officers found in the course of their work was quite interesting. For example, at Medicine Hat, a home made short wave radio was discovered, with the radio antenna threaded through the prisoners' clothes line. Messages were smuggled into the camp in cigars, and written in indelible pencil on wax paper, in nutshells, sausages, and tin cans. The information contained usually came from Germany with the German censors allowing it to get through. Other cases included a home made air rifle at Medicine Hat, instruments rigged up for low power high voltage electric charges, short wave radio antennae made from bedsprings, fine wire wrapped

around the baseboard; and explosive belts. There was even one case of a German Air Force officer at Camp 20 who injected dental wax into his chin. After this facial disfiguration which made him unrecognizable to the staff, he made four unsuccessful escape attempts. The camp authorities were also desirous of finding S.S. prisoners within the ranks of ordinary prisoners, presumably to segregate them. The original S.S. personnel had tattoo marks under their left arm at the armpit, which were basically greenish in color. The Intelligence Officers also had to be alert for information concealed in loaves of bread, cigarette tins, books, and several types of miscellaneous parcels. Later in the war, there was good psychological value in letting the German prisoners see this concealed information, as it confirmed the hopelessness of the German cause. However, in the case of letters and materials entering the camp, there was the problem that the Camp Gestapo was tampering with the mail, as was noted in this memo:

....a memo from the D.P.O.W. which indicates that the Commandant, Camp 133, believes that P.W. mail was confiscated by the Gestapo element in the camp. There have been indications for some time that the P.W. Camp Gestapo have been controlling camp mail. This places two weapons in the hands of Gestapo control: a) double censorship on incoming mail making it possible to keep out news from Germany which would have an adverse affect (from the Party point of view) on the P.W. b) as a punishment weapon.

Holding back P.W. mail is probably even more effective than beatings as a means of making the P.W. a "loyal" Nazi. It is considered that this control over incoming P.W. mail is a most serious threat to our Psychological Warfare operations. It is therefore strongly recommended that action be taken by the responsible branch to have P.W. mail sorted and delivered to the P.W. addresses and not placed in the hands of German camp officials for sorting and delivering.<sup>247</sup>

There was a great fear of the Gestapo element in the Canadian camps. They had made their presence quite well known to the authorities with the murders of German P.W. at Medicine Hat on 22 July 1943 and 10 September 1944. The Military Court of Inquiry noted that in the murder of August Plaszek that:

The guilty party or parties were not discovered, but a good many P.W., strongly Nazi, who either assisted in, connived at, or approved of the hanging, were uncovered. Some of these, all strongly Nazi and some Gestapo, had been troublemakers at Lethbridge and Ozada and it is evident that they were anxious to get control of the camp from the slightly more moderate Nazi group previously in control.<sup>248</sup>

Other documents speak of the influence of the Gestapo in the

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., A D.M.I. to D.C.G.S., 1 August 1944.

<sup>248</sup> D.P.O.W., File H.Q.S. 7236, Case of hanging by his fellow prisoners of P.W. Sdt. PLASZEK, August.

The best information on the murders at Medicine Hat can be found in Douglas Sagi's article "My Fuehrer, I Follow Thee" The Canadian Magazine, 4 January 1975.

camps, especially those in Alberta. The notes of a German prisoner and his scrapbook were captured by the "scouts"<sup>249</sup> in the camp, and provide illuminating insights into the life in the camps:

....that is the P.W. camp 132 in Medicine Hat. This camp had temporarily 10,000 German prisoners or more. The proverb about the hundred Germans who have a hundred different opinions is known to everyone. Thus anyone can picture for himself exactly how things looked in the camp....All those "superior Gentlemen" who, on the journey to our new place of abode, had sold their ribbons and medals ...for cigarettes, who had given away service rings and other valuables stolen on their looting expeditions, who had fought viciously with one another for the cigarette butts of the guards, blossomed forth in the permanent camp as the biggest swindlers and swine. In Medicine Hat, they at once remembered that they were superiors of the other soldiers. Of course, they had everything here. Everyone had his good food, his comfortable bed and a good accommodation. I can even state positively that 70% of the P.W. had not fared so well at home as they did here under the Detaining Power. Though the various gentlemen had previously cursed the war and the German leaders, they now immediately once more gathered behind a red swastika banner....And at this moment the Nazi hierarchy began with their comrades in arms: Gestapo and spiritual and cultural trustees. Everyone was now watched by everyone else. Were we not a German island in enemy land?....it is clear that one may

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<sup>249</sup>"Scouts" were unarmed members of the Veterans Guard who patrolled within the barbed wire compound of the camp and watched for any illicit activities on the part of the German prisoners.

not have an opinion of his own... To think is absolutely forbidden....Just imagine! There had to be appointed hut leaders, section leaders, sport leaders, group leaders, leaders and even more leaders. Now who is the best one; the most suited, and above all, who has the longest service? ...In July 1943, there came seven medical officers from the officers camp in Bowmanville who, allegedly, brought with them a communication from the most senior German officer in Canada, Lt.-Gen. Schmidt. All possible affairs of the camp whether good or bad, were now carried through as if ordered by General Schmidt. And now a little "Gestapo" had also come into existence which sternly saw to it that all the soldiers of the camp behaved as exemplary Nazis. Woe to him who dared to give free vent to his thoughts! Pitilessly, measures were taken against him. Some P.W. were tired of being duped any more by these uniformed tramps and got together to bring about an overthrow of these elements. But through treachery, the camp police got wind of this and a few of those revolutionists had to leave the camp. The enraged mob got hold of one of them, dragged him into the recreation hut and strung him up on one of the rafters here without any trial whatever, after he first had been stoned half to death. Thus did Gefr. Plaszek, having done his duty towards the Fatherland at the front, die the hero's death....such a spy system started that one couldn't say a word anymore. Everyone walked around quietly and oppressed. Only a shrewd observer would notice that if two men were walking one of them kept looking behind in order to detect immediately possible spies.. A phrase was coined in the camp: "The German look." Everyone for himself. Nobody was anxious to stick their own necks out. An apparent quiet settled down in the camp the last month of 1943. It almost looked as if



nothing but peace and harmony reigned amongst all the P.W. But when the P.W. arrived from Camp 23 Monteith; almost all of them belonging to the navy, things changed suddenly. Amongst these people who now arrived in our camp, were real criminals....These crooks had been longer in imprisonment than the people from Lethbridge. Three factions were now to be found in the camp....these "paragons of the German armed forces" were fighting amongst themselves. Like dogs, they scuffled over the administration huts, as over the meat pots of Egypt. And in the papers, news items and camp orders, public spiritedness and comradeship was being preached....Everything that happened in Medicine Hat traces back to this man<sup>250</sup>, who already in the prisoners' camp in Egypt had made propaganda for lynch law. His first act was to build up the already existing camp police....These men had the knack of disturbing the peace of the whole camp. Beatings were daily occurrences....issued an order in which each soldier by threat of having his bones broken was forbidden to remain outside the hut after 2000 hours. It was the privilege of the Gestapo to stroll through the camp at night and do their dirty work as a result of which others were then beaten up. Individuals who didn't feel secure any longer in the camp sought the protection of the Camp Commandant....<sup>251</sup>

Thus the conditions in the camps as seen through the eyes of a German soldier.

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<sup>250</sup>In order to write this thesis, the author signed an undertaking with the Director, Directorate of History, National Defence Headquarters, promising, in part, to "....observe the spirit of Cabinet Directive 46, dated 7 June 1973, specifically by making no reference to individual names of German prisoners of war, from this source...." This accounts for the deletion of the name of this German soldier.

<sup>251</sup>Intelligence Report, File 26-H-44, 14 November 1944.

The Intelligence Officers noted these goings on in the camps and kept track of individuals who were the activists and those who fulfilled their roles as P.W. These men were classified by degrees of pro and anti Nazi fervour, in order to prepare for their final repatriation to Germany. It was felt that no prisoners would be returned to Germany until after the end of the military occupation, and it was felt that this would be at least 1.5 years after the end of the war. In this classification procedure, the strong Nazis were called BLACKS; the anti-Nazis were called WHITES; and the men in-between were referred to as GREYS. The program used to classify these prisoners was referred to as PHERUDA.<sup>252</sup>

The information gathered for this program was a result of a

<sup>252</sup> PHERUDA referred to the first capital letter in each of the areas in which the P.W. were interrogated. These were in regards to their POLITICAL leanings (five categories from Democrat to Rabid Nazi); Attitude Towards HITLER (five categories from Anti-Hitler to Fanatically Pro Hitler); EDUCATION (five categories from University to Minimum); RELIGION (five categories from devout Protestant or Catholic to neo-pagan or Gottgläubig); USEFULNESS for purposes of labour (five categories from willing and skilled to refuses to work); DEPENDABILITY (five categories from known dependable to undependable); ATTITUDE TOWARDS HITLER (nine categories ranging from Pro-Allied to Anti-Allied). The interrogation report that accompanied PHERUDA included five sets of questions covering PERSONAL DETAILS of his life; GENERAL BACKGROUND (education, work, home life, appraisal of individual); P.W. HISTORY (which camps, attitudes, work record); POLITICAL HISTORY (how politically oriented he was while in Germany); MILITARY HISTORY (which units, which fronts, attitudes); CAMP INFORMATION; EXAMINER'S REMARKS (personality, truthfulness, reliability). The combination of PHERUDA and the Interrogation Report were comprehensive enough to classify the prisoner under one of the BLACK, WHITE, or GREY categories.

compilation of facts and details gleaned from documents, mail, behaviour towards camp personnel, and contacts with various camp guards and interpreter officers. The idea of the program was to try and teach the P.W. about democracy, its ideals and thoughts, and generally how it worked. Arrangements were made with professors and teachers to visit the camps and give talks to the P.W. Special camps were set aside to keep the "blacks" separate from the remaining German prisoners. The basic test of whiteness was the willingness to cooperate with the authorities in different ways.

As time passed by, the Intelligence Officers became aware of German plots to commit mass murder and sabotage. One plot was a HARIKARI CLUB at Grande Lygne. As noted in a letter to all Camp I.O.'s:

....It is based on the old German "Twilight of the Gods (Gotterdaemerung)" philosophy-mythology, wherein the Gods kill off each other in a final orgy of violence. The HARIKARI plan will go into operation when it becomes obvious that the capitulation or destruction of the German Army is imminent and a negotiated peace is beyond hope. When the right moment is decided on by the HARIKARI leaders, members will proceed to murder all fellow P.W. whom they consider to be "cowards" because of their anti-Nazi sentiments. The HARIKARI P.W. will then rush some or all of the guard towers, regardless of cost to themselves, and break out of the enclosure. Some will proceed to murder as many of the Camp Staff as possible. In this connection, the Camp Commandant, Camp I.O. and Camp S.M. have been singled out for

special attention at Grande Lygne. Others will head for the nearest plants, industrial areas, airports etc., to commit as much sabotage as possible. Their final aim is as much murder and destruction as possible before they themselves are killed. It must be realized that the P.W. officers involved in the HARIKARI CLUB are fully aware that a number of innocent people will be killed and that most or all of them will be killed. Nevertheless, their Nazi minds are so transfixed by the "GOTTERDAEMERUNG" idea that their only thought is to go to their deaths in a final blaze of bloody glory, taking as many of the enemy, and as much of his property, as possible with them to destruction....<sup>253</sup>

Another constant headache for the Camp Staff was the German usage of secret writing. At first, the Germans were utilising liquid S/W inks<sup>254</sup> to report to Germany the names of P.W. who appeared unfaithful to Naziism. The Allies

<sup>253</sup> Memo to G.S.O. II; Intelligence, M.D. 2 & 4; G.S.O. III, Intelligence, M.D. 1, 3, 7, 10, 13; Camp Security Officer, Petawawa; all Camp I.O.'s, 14 November 1944.

In a letter to the author, dated 2 September 1975, Colonel E.D.B. Kippen, O.B.E., Commandant at Grande Lygne at the time of the HARIKARI CLUB noted: "....However in my opinion there were relatively few of the German officers that went along with this sort of philosophy, but there were some fanatical Nazis. Anyway the authorities were so concerned that they moved a great many of them to different camps and thus broke up the organization. I know they had me down as a victim and it was rather a strange feeling when carrying out an inspection in the enclosure to have this thought. However, it didn't worry me too much because I thought they wouldn't when it came to the crunch do such a stupid thing. They would only bring disgrace on their officers corps and I am sure the majority felt that way...."

<sup>254</sup> S/W was the short-form used by the Directorate to refer to the term "secret writing."

countered with a new sensitized paper (coated stock) which prevented the use of any liquid S/W inks, or other commonly known methods in normal P.W. correspondence. However, these methods might still be used when writing on the backs of photographs or in inter-camp correspondence, where the sensitized paper was not used. In March 1944, there was an indication of a new high grade S/W ink. A search at Medicine Hat in September 1944 turned up S/W materials of the highest calibre, as well as complete directions from Germany as to how and for what purpose they were to be used. The ink was of the "solid" type used by the Abwehr<sup>255</sup> and was designated as "AV Putty." This ink had formerly been reserved for only the highest Abwehr. A memorandum to the D.M.I. pointed out the problems that this new ink brought forth:

Solid Abwehr inks are being used throughout P.W. camps in communication with Germany. AV Putty found in mail for P.W. at Camp 132 in February 1944. The second type of high grade solid ink (of the "blue pencil" variety) has been found at Neys. This is the German answer to our sensitized green P.W. paper which was designed to defeat liquid S/W inks. The sensitiveness of the present paper completely defeats any countermeasures which might be used to defeat the use of solid inks in the Lab. Allied censorship chemists have been conducting research to see if they can get paper that would be a protection against liquid S/W inks and at the same time make testing for solid inks possible.

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<sup>255</sup>The Abwehr was the German Secret Service.

In September 1944, the Canadian censorship chemist (Dr. Flemons) reported that he had been successful. The Censorship Advisory Committee on Censorable Communications of Military Interest was convened on 20 September 1944. The D.P.W. representative Lt. Col. Pearson stated that a maximum of 2 months would be required to produce the paper (at Georgetown, Ontario) and get it into camps. Six months later, nothing had yet been done. The delay was due to the supply of chemicals. Paper was to be issued on a monthly basis. A switch would be made from the old sensitized stationery to new coated stationery. At times, both were in use in the camps because of an insufficiency of supply. However their usage continued in order not to cause a breach with Article 36 of the Geneva Convention, by cutting out P.W. letters due to a lack of paper....<sup>256</sup>

The case of AV Putty was considered to be the most startling counter intelligence development of the year. The widespread use of AV Putty meant that Canadian, British and United States paper offered no protection against the putty. It also confirmed the fears of British Counter-Intelligence that a high grade organization had been set up in Germany to make use of the P.W.<sup>257</sup>

<sup>256</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Department of National Defence, RG 24, A, Vol. 2296, HQS 31 Vol. 1, Memorandum to D.M.I., 22 February 1945.

<sup>257</sup> See Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File 72/222, Attempted Rescue By German Submarine U-536 of P.W. in the Baie des Chaleurs, September 1943.

The officers camp at Bowmanville had a short wave radio and was constantly in touch with the German High Command. This file tells how three Germans (including their top submarine ace Otto Kretschmer) were to escape and be picked up by this submarine in the Baie des Chaleurs. However, only

At the end of 1944, the British Government requested that 50,000 additional prisoners be accommodated in Canada. At the time of their request, there were 35,000 enemy P.W. in Canada, and an additional 7,000 could be accommodated in existing camps without augmenting the number of guards or camp staffs. The reason for this room was the number of P.W. being utilised on labour projects. The Minister of National Defence noted that a further 15,000 could be accommodated by March 1945 if army camps were converted and some 3,000 additional guards were made available. Acceptance of no more than 7,000 could not be recommended because of the additional strain on the already tight manpower situation, and because of the potential risk involved. After discussion, the Cabinet War Committee decided that no additional P.W. could be accepted by Canada,<sup>258</sup> and thus no

one of the Germans managed to effect an escape, and he was recaptured at the Baie. On the way home, the submarine was sunk. After this ineffective escape, Admiral Donitz told Kretschmer to stay in the camp, for he was passing valuable information back to Germany re the Canadian and American war efforts, via the short wave radio in the camp. After the war, the Allies found in Donitz' headquarters a large map illustrating the industries and resources of eastern Canada and the United States. Had the war lasted longer, and the trans-Atlantic bomber being tested by the Germans gone into production, the information gathered by Kretschmer and his colleagues at Bowmanville would have proven quite useful in mounting a strategic bomber offensive against the Western Hemisphere.

<sup>258</sup>Public Archives of Canada; Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Vol. 16, Meeting of Monday 11 December 1944.

large numbers of P.W. were sent to Canada thereafter. However, additional prisoners who were brought over (due to room in the existing accommodations), had reconciled themselves to the fact that Germany had lost the war, and they blamed the Nazi Party for these problems. They were less inclined to bow to the Gestapo than the older prisoners, but this meant that the BLACKS would redouble their efforts to bring the newcomers into line. The year saw a constant struggle between these two groups for control in the camps. The April Intelligence Report at Farnham noted:

...at the end of March, the picture is this: the Nazi pressure group is making every effort to disrupt the unity of the camp. Threats are being directed by them against the anti-Nazi group. The anti-Nazi group, in spite of this, is growing steadily and were the Nazis to be removed, would come into the open, drawing into their following the on-lookers. As a whole, the P.W. are very subdued, owing to the adverse war news.<sup>259</sup>

In order to help settle this conflict in a fashion that was agreeable to the Allies, the authorities decided to segregate the BLACKS from the other prisoners. Some 450 of the most difficult individuals from Medicine Hat were sent to Neys, which was reopened to handle them. Ultimately, Lethbridge was to be a BLACK camp, while Medicine Hat was to be a GREY camp. The officers' camp at Bowmanville was

<sup>259</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of National Defence, RG 24, A, Vol. 2296, HQS 31 Vol. 1, Extract From Monthly Intelligence Report Camp 40, 17 April 1945.



classified at GREY; Gravenhurst and Grande Lygne were BLACK; and Seebe was a mixture.

The fight against S/W material continued into the New Year. India drawing inks (for the prisoners taking art lessons) of Western Hemisphere origin and in unopened bottles were the only inks allowed into the camps. All indelible pencils, paints, crayons, and dyes from Germany were not allowed into the camps. All indelible pencils were grabbed up because if some were let through, the Germans could simulate the name and number of such pencils, and substitute the inactive lead with an active one. Curry powder, caustic pencil and styptic pencil were also viewed with disfavour, because they could be used in S/W communications. Type-writer ribbons were also suspect, and the policy was that only ribbons manufactured in Canada could be used for official correspondence. Marzipan (or marchpane as the English refer to it) was a composition of sweet stuff of powdered almonds. It was felt that marzipan was being used as a means to smuggle in the toffee-like solid Abwehr ink. They were identical in color, and fresh, the marzipan had the same elasticity as the Abwehr ink. Based on these details, the marzipan was not allowed into the camps. A.W. Faber pencils (from Germany) were not admitted to the compounds. Bismuth was not admitted since the zinc could be extracted, and used to make an excellent secret ink. Glycerin per-

manganate, suppositories, and the white frosting on Christmas tree decorations designed to simulate snow were also found to be unsuitable for camp use.

On V-E Day, the prisoners were informed that active hostilities between Canada and Germany had terminated. This was done by posting a prepared SHAEF statement. Commandants of BLACK camps were warned to take extra precautions (i.e. HARIKARI CLUB), and Interpreter Officers were asked to note the reaction of the prisoners. No statement whatever was to be made to the prisoners regarding their status or repatriation. The representative of the Protecting Power was to continue to act until contrary instructions were received by him from his Government. The International Red Cross was to continue to work with P.W., as were the humanitarian agencies, including the Y.M.C.A. However, if the Swiss relinquished their protection of German interests before the repatriation of German prisoners from Canada, the International Committee of the Red Cross might be asked to take over the responsibility for receiving complaints from the P.W., and to carry on some of the functions of the Protecting Power. BLACK prisoners were to be the last to be repatriated. In deciding on what basis the remaining prisoners were to be repatriated, the requirements for P.W. labour were to prevail over all other interests. The P.W. in Canada were still in great demand, and a large number of companies were

still utilising the German labour.<sup>260</sup> It was to be a long time before enough labour would be de-mobilized to cut out the need for German P.W. labour.

<sup>260</sup> The following companies employed P.W. labour under the rules designated by the Department of Labour: Abitibi Power & Paper Company; Algoma Central & Hudson Bay Railway Company; Western Construction & Lumber Company Limited; Alsip Brick; Tile & Lumber Company (Winnipeg); Armour & Graham Ltd. (Chapleau, Ont.); Atlas Lumber Co. (Calgary); Brompton Pulp & Paper Co. (Beardmore, Ont.); Brule Lumber Co. (Brule, Alta.); Canadian Wood Products Co. Ltd.; C.N.R. at Brockville; Carroll Brothers Lumber Co. (Winfield, Alta.); Chisholm Saw Mills Ltd. (Edmonton); Cooksville Co. Ltd. (Cooksville, Ont.); James Cornhill Sons Ltd. (Chatham); Donnell & Mudge Ltd. (New Toronto); Draftwood Lands & Timber Co. (Delray & Huntam, Ont.); Eau Claire Saw Mills Ltd. (Calgary); Erie Peat Ltd. (Port Colborne); Etter-McDougall Saw Mills Ltd. (Winfield, Ont.); D.R. Fraser & Co. Ltd. (Breton, Ont.); Fraser, Brace Ltd. (Chalk River Project); Gillies Brothers & Co. Ltd. (Braeside, Ont.); Great Lakes Paper Co.; Hales H. Ross & Sons Ltd. (Edmonton); Harry Hayley (Ottawa); Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Co. (Espanola); Keeling, Markle & Burns Timber Co. (Owen Sound); J.T. Kendrew & Son (Cochrane, Ont.); Loders Lime Co. (Calgary); G.L. Magann & Co. Ltd. (Toronto); Manitoba Paper Co. Ltd. (Pine Falls, Manitoba); Fred Mannix & Co. Ltd.; Marathon Paper Mills (Port Arthur, Ont.); J.A. Matthews Ltd. (Rainy Lake, Ont.); McRae Lumber Co. (Faust, Alta.); Medalta Potteries Ltd. (Medicine Hat, Alta.); Medicine Hat Greenhouses Ltd. (Medicine Hat, Alta.); Medicine Hat Brick & Tile Co. (Medicine Hat); R.D. Moon (Wolf Creek, Alta.); Newaygo Timber Co.; Nipigon Lake Timber Co. Ltd.; Northern Paper Mills (Hansen, Ont.); North Shore Timber Co. (Little Current, Ont.); Minnesota Pulp & Paper Co.; Pigeon Timber Co. (Neys, Ont.); Provincial Paper Co. Ltd. (Pt. Arthur); Pulpwood Supply Co. Ltd. (Longlac, Ont.); Rudolph-McChesney Lumber Co. Ltd. (Timmins); N.R. Shaw Lumber Co. (Calgary); Spray Construction Co. Ltd. (Calgary); Spruce Falls Power & Paper Co. Ltd. (Kapusksing); William Stone Sons Ltd. (Ingersoll); Swanson Lumber Co. (Northville, Alta.); Western Construction & Lumber Co. Ltd. (Whitcourt, Alta.); Temiskaming & Northern Ont. R.R. (North Bay); R. Wallace & Son (North Bay); Toronto Brick Co. (Don Valley); Metcalfe Project; Strathmore Project (Strathmore, Alta.); Lethbridge Project (Lethbridge, Alta.); Brooks Project (Brooks, Alta.); Riding Mountain Camp (Dauphin, Manitoba); Pt. Arthur Farm Labour Project; Chatham Beet Field Projects; Farnham Quebec Project.

In May 1945, a total of 11,115 men were employed on various labour projects under the auspices of the Department of Labour and the D.P.W. Some 43 groups were employed in wood cutting projects, and this by far employed the largest number of P.W. Two other groups were working in brickyards, and another in a pottery plant. Other single groups worked at peat cutting, in a tannery, in a fertilizer plant and in a greenhouse. Others lived in hostels, and on individual farms. Even the various camps had individual specialties:

....Camp 44 officers camp operates a large farm and has considerable livestock. This farm is operated on a scientific basis and practical instruction is given in scientific agriculture by capable instructors....  
 Camp 40 operates a small farm and  
 Camp 42 has a large greenhouse. Camp 132 operates a 300 acre irrigated farm and 100 men go out daily to work on it. The men in Camp 100 have been working on road construction in the area of the camp and also have been laying a new water main for camp use. The other camps all have small gardens and flower plots that are operated on an individual proposition. Following V-E Day, it has been noted that the men are more anxious to get outside employment and the volunteers exceeded the numbers required for many jobs....  
 A considerable number of P.W. presently in Canada have been making inquiries regarding the possibility of being permitted to remain in this country and being allowed to immigrate to other countries rather than being returned to Germany. They have been informed that Article 75 of the Geneva Con-

vention will be adhered to.<sup>261</sup>

By high summer, outside employment had become increasingly popular. One of the reasons for this interest was the desire to earn money with which to purchase small comforts, and also to get out from behind the wire.<sup>262</sup> It was also felt that by working outside the wire, they might gain experience and training in trades that would be of help when they were forced again to earn their living. The produce that the prisoners gathered was largely consumed by them (i.e. cabbage for sauerkraut, radishes, and potatoes). Their pay continued to be 50¢ per day, and was credited to their canteen account. At the same time as this was taking place, the PHERUDA teams were combing the camps, classifying each P.W. and transferring them to the appropriate camps. By the end of September 1945, some 9,172 P.W. had been classified, leaving some 24,872 to be analysed.<sup>263</sup> Only GREYS and WHITES were sent out on

<sup>261</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of Secretary of State, RG 6, A 13, Vol. 6, File 2422, D.N.D., D.P.W. Intelligence Summary May 1945.

Article 75 of the Geneva Convention stated that all prisoners of war were to be repatriated as soon as possible after the conclusion of peace.

<sup>262</sup>When the Swiss gave up their role as Protecting Power, the Germans no longer received their monthly salary from the Swiss Consul General. They thus had no means of financing purchases in the canteen except by working for the farmers at the going rate of 50¢ per day.

<sup>263</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of Secretary of State, RG 6, A 13, Vol. 6, File 2422, D.N.D., D.P.W. Information Bulletin September 1945.

Works Projects; no BLACKS were permitted to leave the compounds. At Camp 40, a tinge of democracy had appeared, with meetings of the "Representative Assembly" open to all P.W. and well-attended.<sup>264</sup> With the passage of time and the increasing availability of civilian labour, the P.W. employed on the projects were withdrawn and returned to camp. In the lumbering industry however, the P.W. labour was still in great demand.

The authorities continued to wage their warfare against the Nazis and Nazi element in the camps. All possible measures were taken to suppress Nazi censorship in the camps. All P.W. camp officials who were classified as BLACKS and DARK GREYS were to be removed from office and be replaced by WHITES or LIGHT GREYS elected by secret ballot arranged by and under the supervision of the Camp Commandant. Severe disciplinary action was to be taken against any prisoner who committed acts that would discourage WHITE or GREY activity. All Nazi literature was to be removed from the camp enclosure; while Canadian, British and American media were permitted in the compound. Radio sets were allowed into the WHITE and GREY camps, and no radios were given to BLACK personnel. However, programs would be trans-

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid., Directorate of Military Intelligence M.I. 7 Monthly Bulletin October 1945.

mitted into the compounds from the Scout Centre.<sup>265</sup>

In February 1946, the first German prisoners were repatriated to Germany. Some 2,755 P.W. and Protected Personnel were sent back aboard H.M.T. AQUITANIA in February. No Austrian P.W. nor P.W. included on the R.C.M.P. list for temporary retention in Canada were included in this movement. They were escorted by 13 officers and 268 other ranks of the Veterans Guard.<sup>266</sup> By March, plans were in effect to close many of the projects and move the men into camps prior to embarkation overseas. As was noted in the Directorate Information Summary:

....Present arrangements call for a limited number of men to be left in the country to engage in agricultural work for the summer months, either on individual farms or out of hostels. The work hostels in western Ontario are still in operation and many of the men will be retained there for several months to come. A number of smaller projects in various parts of the country have been closed either because the work was completed or because

<sup>265</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of National Defence, RG 24, Vol. 2296.

The Scout Centre was a building located outside the main compound where the Scouts gathered after their patrols of the camp and did other related duties.

<sup>266</sup>Department of National Defence, Directorate of History, File 113.3V1009 (D 110).

This contingent of prisoners was guarded by 13 officers and 268 O.R. of Veterans Guard. Some 40% of the Guard were younger men, and were quite sloppy in regards to dress, appearance and attitude. A great fuss was raised that these men were not a credit to the Canadian Army.

civilian labour had become available  
 ....Many of the P.W. have been moved  
 from Canada and more will be trans-  
 ferred within the next few weeks re-  
 sulting in the closing of a number of  
 the camps in this country....<sup>267</sup>

In March, the AQUITANIA sailed once again with a load of 2,963 P.W. and 15 Protected Personnel. These men were all GREYS selected by the Commandants. Once again there were no Austrian P.W. nor P.W. required as witnesses for the murder trials, or for temporary retention in Canada; nor prisoners of war or protected personnel passed by the Mixed Medical Commission for repatriation were included in this draft. In late March, the AQUITANIA sailed once again with 2,978 P.W., including 22 protected personnel. No P.W. required as witnesses in the murder trials, or for temporary retention in Canada were to be included in the draft. This draft also consisted of 27 stretcher cases. By the end of July, only 4,400 were left in Canada; and these were kept to provide labour for the sugar beet crop harvesting. Some 6,000 Germans had made written application to stay in Canada, but the Geneva Convention stated that all should be repatriated. Arrangements were made to evacuate the remaining 4,400 in November 1946. This sparked protests from farmers, and the Department of Labour was asked to retain 200 P.W.

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<sup>267</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Department of Secretary of State; RG-6, A 13, Vol. 6, File 2422, D.N.D., D.P.W. Information Bulletin, March 1946.



as help for individual farmers. The Cabinet decided against such a measure, and all save some 60 prisoners were gone by the first week in January 1947. The remainder were confined to hospital, or undergoing jail sentences for crimes committed, and some six cases were under investigation by the Department of External Affairs. Twenty months after the termination of hostilities, Internment Operations in Canada finally ceased.

## Chapter 10 - An Evaluation of the Canadian Internment Operations.

At this stage in the study, it would seem appropriate to evaluate the performance of the entire operation and the men who were responsible for it.

As a result of the extensive powers given to the Executive through the Defence of Canada Regulations, it was almost inevitable that some persons resident in Canada should be deprived of their civil liberties. While it is not the primary objective of this study to investigate the impact of government legislation as it pertained to civil liberties during the war period, it is clear that violations of individual rights did take place in Canada in the period under investigation. Persons "suspected of treasonable activity" were arrested under the Defence of Canada Regulations 21 and 24 for "acting in any matter prejudicial to the public safety or the safety of the state."<sup>268</sup> It is difficult to determine how many of these people posed a potential threat to Canada. Some of those arrested were not guilty, as evidenced by the fact that the Advisory Committee and the Alien Tribunals saw fit to release some of these individuals. In a partial defense of the Government's actions in the internment of civilians, note can be taken

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<sup>268</sup> The cases of the individuals jailed under the Defence of Canada Regulations can be found in the Department of Justice Files (RG 13, B II) at the Public Archives.

of the special treatment that these people received under P.C. 4121 of 13 December 1939. Enemy aliens were not entitled in any Convention, to the special rights and privileges accorded to combatant prisoners of war as defined in Articles 1 and 81 of the Geneva Convention. Despite protestations in some quarters, the Government decided that the provisions of the Convention should be made applicable to the prisoners as to their general treatment, and the latter benefited from its many clauses, especially the one which gave them 20 cents per day working pay.

With some innocent people interned, their families were destined to suffer without their presence. As was seen, the Government, through P.C. 3204, provided relief for those German families in need. However many of these families, though well below the subsistence level, did not qualify for relief. The Swiss Consul, Mr. Jaccard, upon seeing the plight of many of these people, alerted the Swiss Legation in Washington to their problems. In response, German welfare associations donated \$2,000 to assist these destitute cases. By September 1940, the situation had grown worse as more local and provincial governments withdrew relief from enemy aliens. In most cases, the only reason was ~~the~~ the person's racial origin, not his misconduct. There was an irony in that the families of some loyal civilians who were interned received no relief while the breadwinner was jailed; while

persons who were known to be pro-Fascist were provided with food and lodging while in an internment camp, and their families received relief.

Most of the internees sent over here by the British Government were guilty of only having a German or Italian name. No one in Britain had imagined how the German "blitzkrieg" offensive would alter the balance of military power to the Third Reich in the early days of the war. The war had suddenly come to the doorstep of the British Isles and reports of Fifth Column activities in the Netherlands made the British Government panic and intern all male civilians. When Mr. Paterson, the Home Office representative, came over and authorized the release of many of the British civilian internees, it proved that the British Government had over-reacted to the crisis and interned many innocent people. The Canadian Government regarded the skills of the latter group so highly as to utilize over 600 of them on various employment programs in the country. Should the British Government be judged harshly for their actions? Perhaps, but at that time they were in the midst of a rapidly deteriorating crisis, and, as in Canada, the rights of the individual took second place to the preservation of the country.

Questions have been raised as to the reasons for Canada's decision to accept civilian internees and combatant

prisoners of war from Great Britain. It has been pointed out that it was incongruous for Canada, when seeking autonomy from the United Kingdom, to accede to British demands and take on the care of these prisoners. The Canadian Government was totally unprepared for the request that emanated from Whitehall, and the construction of the camps at Kananaskis and Petawawa was to constitute the total Canadian internment operations. When the British request was received, the Government at first hesitated, because the combination of reports of the Fifth Column activities in Europe and having these prisoners in the country might unsettle the populace.<sup>269</sup> Though the Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee give no reason for the ultimate acceptance of these and the following prisoners of war, it can be speculated that Mackenzie King, though not desiring prisoners in the country, felt obligated to take them to ensure that a divisive split did not appear in the British Commonwealth. At this time in the war, Britain stood alone against the Axis Powers and morale would have dropped had Canada split with the British Government over accepting these prisoners. India, South Africa and Australia were to accept prisoners sent from Britain, so Commonwealth unity deemed that Canada do her share. The civilians that were sent over from

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<sup>269</sup>Public Archives of Canada, Minutes of the Cabinet War Committee, RG 2, 7c, Minutes of 5 June 1940.

Britain were subject to the same benefits under P.C. 4121 as their Canadian counterparts.

The question of autonomy can be followed through to the continuation of acceptance of prisoners. Though accepting these prisoners on behalf of the British Government, a financial agreement was worked out by which the British would be charged for the construction of new camps (e.g. - Medicine Hat and Lethbridge). A charge would also be laid against the British account for the pay of German officer prisoners after their embarkation from the United Kingdom. All these costs were to be repaid to the Canadian Government after the termination of hostilities. The Government felt that it could continue to accept prisoners as long as there was available accommodation here in Canada. However when the British asked for large-scale acceptance of prisoners in September 1943, and existing accommodations had been completely utilized, the War Cabinet stood firm and urged that no further prisoners be accepted beyond the number fixed.<sup>270</sup> This decision was reiterated in December 1944 when the United Kingdom authorities queried the possibility of accommodating 50,000 additional prisoners in Canada. Facilities could have held another 7,000 P.W. at maximum, and the War Committee stated that no additional P.W. were to be accepted.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>270</sup>Ibid., Minutes of 15 September 1943.

<sup>271</sup>Ibid., Minutes of 11 December 1944.

The feeling was that the Allied occupation of France had removed the threat of invasion from Britain, and that there was no longer a need for the United Kingdom to "farm out" its prisoners to the Dominions. So in the end, Canadian autonomy was preserved, and it was subjugated only for the purpose of keeping harmony amongst the members of the Commonwealth at a time of great crisis in the war.

Autonomy came to the fore again with the question of the shackling of German prisoners at Dieppe in August 1942, and subsequently during the raid on Sark. The strong stand of the British Government towards reprisals on German prisoners was ironic in that the majority of prisoners to be shackled were in Canadian camps; and the majority of prisoners being shackled in Germany were Canadian P.W.'s. Yet the Canadian Government had not been consulted before the decision to implement reprisals had taken place. Here would have been a chance to deviate from British policy and follow a separate course of action; but again the Prime Minister chose to follow London's instructions in order to present a united Commonwealth front to such an important problem.<sup>272</sup> It might be suggested that in light of the threat to Commonwealth unity by the Axis Powers, King deemed the latter to be more important than Canadian autonomy which could be deferred to a more advantageous time. After this

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<sup>272</sup>Ibid., Minutes of 9 October 1942.

crisis had simmered with no appearance of resolution, the Cabinet War Committee informed the United Kingdom Government that it intended to take independent action towards the unshackling of prisoners.<sup>273</sup> This prompted the British Government to announce a policy of unshackling German prisoners. So once again, though originally bowing to British requests, the Canadian Government expressed its own ideas on issues of great importance and set its perimeters on the questions at hand.

A method of evaluating the success or failure of the Canadian internment operations per se is to assess the opinions of the people who were involved in the affair - guards, Commandants, staff, members of the Directorate, and German prisoners. The late Colonel R.O. Bull, Commandant at Medicine Hat, was a learned, fair, and humane man, and in his role as Commandant, noted the successes and failures in the day to day operation of the camp. He related how cumbersome the system was from the outset - shared responsibility by the Departments of Secretary of State and National Defence; different levels of authority with the District Officers Commanding, Canadian Provost Corps and Veterans Guard. Interim steps were taken to try to eliminate the unnecessary aspects of the Directorate organization. The Canadian Provost Corps was eliminated and members were

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<sup>273</sup>Ibid., Minutes of 30 November 1942.



transferred to the Veterans Guard of Canada, which became responsible for supplying camp staffs and guards. . The original position of Director of Internment Operations was replaced by a Commissioner of Internment Operations and Commissioner of Refugee Camps under P.C. 4568 of 25 June 1941. This also proved unsuccessful and ultimately the rôle of Secretary of State was abolished and custody of civilians and combatant P.W. was vested in the Department of National Defence (under P.C. 36/500 of 20 January 1943). Inside the camps, Bull noted a lack of uniformity in the treatment of prisoners, with flagrant examples being canteen operations and extension of parole. This could have been controlled with regular inspection of the camps by officers familiar with Internment Operations. However, there was only one individual who had served in internment camps in the Directorate and his duties were with the Guard Company and not the Camp Staff. Colonel Bull also felt that the introduction of the Department of Labour through the Works Projects late in the war, was an additional burden.<sup>274</sup> Colonel Bull recommended that administration be concentrated under one Directorate, that the Directorate be composed of officers who had practical experience in internment camps, that the Department of Labour be eliminated from any responsibility

<sup>274</sup> Colonel R.O. Bull to D.O.C. M.D. 13, 25 April 1944.

Kindly loaned to the author for use by Colonel W.J.H. Ellwood.

regarding administration or control of P.W., that revised instructions regarding treatment of P.W. be published and rigidly adhered to, that inspecting officers be appointed to check the camps at frequent intervals, and that the administration of the Work Camps be the sole responsibility of the Department of National Defence. All these could have been positive changes, for throughout the war orders seemed to be coming from too many quarters. These points illustrate the major shortcoming of the Directorate - too much outside interference. Unfortunately the only previous experience at handling prisoners of war had been in World War I, and the people here had all been civilian internees. Perhaps lack of prior experience can be used as an excuse for the Directorate staff, but the shortcomings caused definitely hindered internment operations in Canada.

Major E.H.J. Barber was a member of the staff of the Directorate, and after Internment Operations had ceased, he wrote a "Memo On Internment Operations In Canada 1939-1947." Basically, it was a summary of the development of Internment Operations in Canada, but sometimes Barber noted shortcomings in the procedures. In regard to the larger camps, he noted:

.....The large camp, that is one of over 1,000 had certain disadvantages in matters of administration and control. The size of the population prevented the Commandant or any other officer knowing any considerable number of P.W. The consequence of

this situation was that the P.W. spokesman and his staff had greater control over the P.W. in larger than in smaller camps. In the smaller camps, the Commandant and his staff came to know a good deal about a great many of the internees and P.W. and were thus in a better position in the small camps to select and appraise the P.W. for work parties and for segregation. Generally speaking it can be said that from a financial point of view the larger the camp the better, but from the point of administration and psychological warfare the smaller<sup>275</sup> camp is much to be preferred....

The camps at Medicine Hat and Lethbridge were both like small towns, and the P.W. were generally anonymous faces to the members of the Camps' Staffs. In these cases, the pro-Nazi elements had a greater control over developments in the camps. The authorities had to ensure that they did not gain overall control of the camp.

Barber's notations regarding organization of the Directorate sound quite similar to those of Colonel Bull:

....The officer responsible for the administration of P.W. being called upon to act in cooperation with the other branches of the staff and several departments of the Government should hold the greatest seniority in rank which the magnitude of the operation would justify. It is also considered that one of the greatest handicaps from which the Directorate suffered was the length and number of stages in the channels of communication to the ultimate

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<sup>275</sup> Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File 382.013 (D1), Memo On Internment Operations In Canada by Major E.H.J. Barber, pp. 14-15.

authority....The staff of the D.P.W. during the last conflict was nearly at all times inadequate to properly deal with the functions imposed upon it.... In time of war, officers available for staff duties of this nature are not plentiful and most of the appointments to the staff of the D.P.W. were made with very little regard to the duties to be performed....<sup>276</sup>

Mr. Ernest Maag, the delegate of the International Red Cross in Canada during hostilities, was a man who was well versed with all happenings in the internment operations. In April 1946, he wrote a report on the handling of internment operations here in Canada, and gave some recommendations for the future, based on what shortcomings he had noticed from 1939:

....It is the considered opinion of this delegation that in any future conventions, the duties, functions, and rights of the I.C.R.C. and its delegates should be more fully covered. The delegates should have the same prerogatives as the inspectors of the Protecting Power and should therefore have permission to visit all places of internment and detention without witnesses. During the war just ended the respective competencies of the Protecting Power and this delegation were settled by mutual agreement. The Canadian Government held fast to the idea that the Protecting Power should attend to all complaints of the prisoners, whereas the delegate of the I.C.R.C. should take care primarily for the physical and intellectual needs of the prisoners....In future conventions, some thought must be given to the following weaknesses in the present set-up: A camp may be administered by a

<sup>276</sup>Ibid., pp. 36-37.

Commandant who consistently acts contrary to the instructions which he has from his superiors and may continue to do so until by accident an inspector of the Detaining Power, a visit from the Protecting Power, or a delegate from the I.C.R.C. visit the camp and find conditions which are contrary to the conventions. The commandant may suppress any contact between them and the outside world for a considerable time and it is for this reason that we believe that the spokesmen should be compelled to send at weekly intervals a form (standard) addressed to the Protecting Power on which they register that all is well in the camp or otherwise request an urgent visit by the inspectors, clearly stating the reasons why such a visit is requested. This form which may be condensed to a standard postcard must go through the mails without delay....<sup>277</sup>

In the rest of his report, Maag went through each individual article of the Geneva Convention and noted Canada's adherence or non-adherence to the Convention. He found that Canada adhered strictly to every article of the Convention, and Maag had no complaints as to the Canadian performance.

Colonel Harry Streight, who was Director of Internment Operations at the end of hostilities, wrote a narrative report on the work of the Directorate in September 1945. In

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<sup>277</sup> Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File 382.013 (D 13), Report of the Red Cross Delegate on Internment Operations in Canada, pp. 222-223.

In looking at the Canadian adherence to the Geneva Convention, and the utmost cooperation given to the members of the Protecting Power and the International Committee of the Red Cross; this author feels that Mr. Maag's comments are pertinent only to the German authorities in reviewing Internment Operations during World War II.

it, he recommended that:

all matters relating to P.W. treatment and administration in all their respects be placed in the hands of one single authority....Because the administrative problems and routine military matters constitute approximately 85% of the work, the appropriate Branch and the one best suited to be such single authority is the Branch of the Adjutant General.... Welfare and organizations like the I.C.R.C. and the War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. are not matters that enter into the realm of international affairs, and should be entirely under the control of the military authorities. The Department of External Affairs should confine its activities to its relations with other Governments.... While the Geneva Convention of 27 July 1929...has been a great step forward, it is obvious that these Conventions are far from perfect in light of the experiences of W.W. II and will need substantial revision in the near future. When that time comes, the Staff Officers who have had first hand practical experience with the problems which have arisen should be consulted in order that the Conventions of the future be more practical and not just based upon theory and the idealism of Geneva, and the State Departments of the Signatory Governments. Such new conventions must ensure that Canadian, other British and U.S.A. prisoners in enemy hands receive treatment approximately equal to that of enemy prisoners held by them.<sup>278</sup>

Major Henry Smith of the Veterans Guard is the former interpreter and Intelligence Officer at Lethbridge. In a report on the responsibilities and functions of the Veterans Guard, he had critical words regarding the Psychological Warfare

<sup>278</sup>Ibid., File 113.3P4 (D2), Directorate Narrative, 5 September 1945, pp. 7-9.

program:

....my personal opinion was that it was a waste of time and money and that the scheme was poorly organized....lectures were in English only; interpreters attended as observers but were not ordered to translate; the speeches could not be interpreted ahead of time for the speeches were off the cuff and not prepared ahead of time. The lectures given in English cut down the P.W. attendance to below 10%; these men were better educated and not hard core Nazis. Those who could have benefitted did not speak English. Some P.W. came to the lectures in order to improve the English they were taking at their English courses. Lectures were not held in either of the 2 large reg halls capable of holding 1,000 men each but in the school huts able to hold 100. The desire was to make the talks more intimate and get the P.W. to ask questions. Most lectures were held after V-E Day and the P.W. were more interested in getting home and worrying about their families....<sup>279</sup>

He also felt that it would have been wise to let the Germans read the war news, which would have discouraged them. Major Smith felt that the program was started too late to meet with success - that mens' minds were too much concerned with getting home as quickly as possible to be bothered with these things, and especially learning them in the language of the conqueror. His solution was to take small groups of 100-200 and put them in camps away from the rest and concentrate on them.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., File 113.3P4-02 (D1), Papers Received From Major H. Smith (ret'd) Describing the Function and Responsibility of the V.G. of C., pp. 6-7.

How does this author view the job done by the Directorate during World War II? Considering the influx of prisoners in June 1940 when the Canadian Government had been expecting only 400 civilian internees, I would have to say that it proved quite flexible. It was quite a chore to set up the accommodations necessary to handle these prisoners, along with all the attendant details to ensure the smooth running of the camps. But it was done in time for their arrival, and this ability to be ready for each new batch of prisoners was one of the strong points of the Directorate throughout the war. Mistakes were bound to be made, considering that the men at the Directorate had had no previous experience in the handling of prisoners of war. There were shortcomings in the operation, since the process was one of continual trial and error. They did the best possible job with the materials and men available to them, and it is to their credit that neither Mr. Maag as representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross nor Mr. Jaccard as representative of the Protecting Power, ever launched a serious complaint against their handling of the German prisoners. The minor complaints brought to the attention of the Directorate by these gentlemen were always dealt with speedily and efficiently by either Lt.-Col. Fordham, Colonel Stethem or Colonel Streight, in their periods as Commissioner of Internment Operations. Treatment of the prisoners during



the war was fair and just. The major problems that arose were bureaucratic in nature - too many Departments involved in handling prisoners (Secretary of State, Labour, National Defence); an inadequate staff at the Directorate; failure of the Psychological Warfare Program. All these resulted from various Departments wanting to become involved in the handling of P.W., and led to greater inefficiency in the whole operation. A more efficient job could have been done had there been better internal organization; but these bureaucratic difficulties cannot take away from the effort made by many individuals both at the camps and in the Directorate.

How many P.W. were held in Canada during World War II? On behalf of the United Kingdom Government, Canada held 31,465 combatant P.W., and 4,170 enemy merchant seamen and refugees. The Canadian Government itself interned 174 enemy merchant seamen and 2,241 civilians. So in total, the number held was about 38,000.<sup>280</sup>

What happened to the German prisoners? As mentioned, all of them were returned to Germany by 1947. It has been noted that some 6,000 had made written application to remain in Canada, but the Geneva Convention demanded that they be repatriated to Germany. Some did come back later and settle

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<sup>280</sup> Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File 113.3P4 (D2), Directorate Narrative, 5 September 1945.

here in Canada. In the early years after the war, they needed a letter of reference to be allowed re-entry into the country. These men did come back and have made a worthy contribution to the growth of their new homeland.<sup>281</sup> However, some 162 German prisoners never did return home and were buried on these foreign shores. Of this total, 17 deaths resulted from accidents on works projects, a further 15 from drowning accidents (12 of which occurred during the prisoners' free time on Work Projects). Two men died in the bush, 14 committed suicide, 5 were shot attempting to escape, and five were hanged for the murder of two P.W. By natural causes, 22 died from heart disease, 12 from tuberculosis, 14 from cancer, 9 from pneumonia, 4 from peritonitis, 3 because of mental conditions, two each from diabetes and neuritis, and several others from unknown diseases.<sup>282</sup>

These men had been buried at the spots of their deaths and remained there until November 1970, when they were dis-interred. Then, from 36 sites across Canada, the bodies of these Germans, and those who had died here during World War I were taken to Woodland Cemetery in Kitchener, where they were re-interred. On a Sunday in May 1971, Canadian and

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<sup>281</sup>Moss, Bruce. "Five Who Came Back", Weekend Magazine, #17, 29 April 1967, pp. 22 & 24-27.

<sup>282</sup>Directorate of History, Department of National Defence, File 382.013 (D1), Memo On Internment Operations In Canada 1939-1947 by Major E.H.J. Barber, p. 19.

German veterans, next of kin and government representatives joined in paying homage to these men and dedicating the German War Dead in Canada Cemetery. In the future, these plots would be attended by the Canadian Agency of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.<sup>283</sup>

Probably the best indicator of the work that the D.P.W. and the men of the Camp Staffs accomplished is the feelings of the German prisoners themselves. Several took the opportunity after the war to write to Colonel E.D.B. Kippen, O.B.E., and express their thanks for treatment received. One former prisoner from Lethbridge wrote: "....I thank you and your country for the good care we received, as only now can one appreciate how well off we were..."<sup>284</sup> A German officer who later was Military and Air Attache at the German Embassy in Ottawa, remembered his time at Grande Lygne by saying: "....I also keep in best memory the time I spent in Grande Lygne as far as one may keep in best memory a time spent behind barbed wire."<sup>285</sup> A prisoner who was behind the wire for almost five years wrote from Essen: "....I wish to thank you for your humane and good treatment

<sup>283</sup>Ibid., File 73/724, Carillon Canada, Vol. 4 #3, July-September 1971, Gordon May, "Government, Veterans Representatives Attend German War Dead Ceremony."

<sup>284</sup>Letter to Colonel Kippen, 19 April 1948. Kindly loaned to author for use.

<sup>285</sup>Letter to Colonel Kippen, 30 January 1957. Kindly loaned to author for use.

in your camp....<sup>286</sup> The final letter from a former German prisoner in Hanover shows the gratitude that the Germans felt for their treatment here in Canada:

It is now more than a year ago since I left Canada as a P.W. in your charge and three months since I have been sent home from the U.K. Having regained individual freedom, I may be allowed to remember the years I had to spend in your country, and doing so, I should like to let you know, you as a representative of the Canadian nation, how very much I shall always appreciate the ever so correct and considerate attitude of the Government of Canada and the Military Authorities towards P.W. This is meant to be a simple act of gratitude to fairness met in enemy hands. I honestly believe that many a former P.W. will agree with me, if I say, that your country has done a lot to show Germans in Canadian custody the value of democratic life. The results of this attitude, I hope, will prove to be of stimulating value in rebuilding our own country....<sup>287</sup>

Obviously, such correspondence represents a grossly inadequate sampling of the views of German P.W.'s interned in Canada.

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<sup>286</sup>Letter to Colonel Kippen, 30 May 1946. Kindly loaned to author for use.

<sup>287</sup>Letter to Colonel Kippen, 26 March 1947. Kindly loaned to author for use.

The letters quoted here all support the treatment received in Canada. They are not an adequate sampling of the opinions of German prisoners of war, but unfortunately the author did not have the opportunity to interview any former German prisoners. These letters then represent the only view available of German reactions to their treatment in Canadian camps. In the records made available to this author, it was impossible to document any cases of maltreatment of German prisoners.

Nevertheless, it does tend to conform to the findings of this investigation - that those in charge of internment operations here obeyed the Geneva Convention throughout and carried out their duties in a very responsible and positive manner.

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### VITA AUCTORIS

Family: John Joseph Kelly, eldest son of John Joseph Kelly and his wife Florence Laura Gauthier, and brother of Michael and Chris; born 22 May 1950 at Windsor, Ontario. Unmarried.

#### Education:

1956-1964 Received elementary education at St. Peter School and St. Rose de Lima School, Windsor, Ontario.

1964-1969 Received secondary education at Assumption College High School, Windsor, Ontario. Honours Secondary School Graduation Diploma, 1969.

1969-1973 Registered as undergraduate in the General Course in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario. Admitted to Honours History Program in September 1970. Bachelor of Arts Degree in Honours History conferred May 1973.

1973-1976 Admitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Windsor, as a candidate for the Degree of Master of Arts in History, September 1973. Thesis submitted August 1976; graduated October 1976.

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